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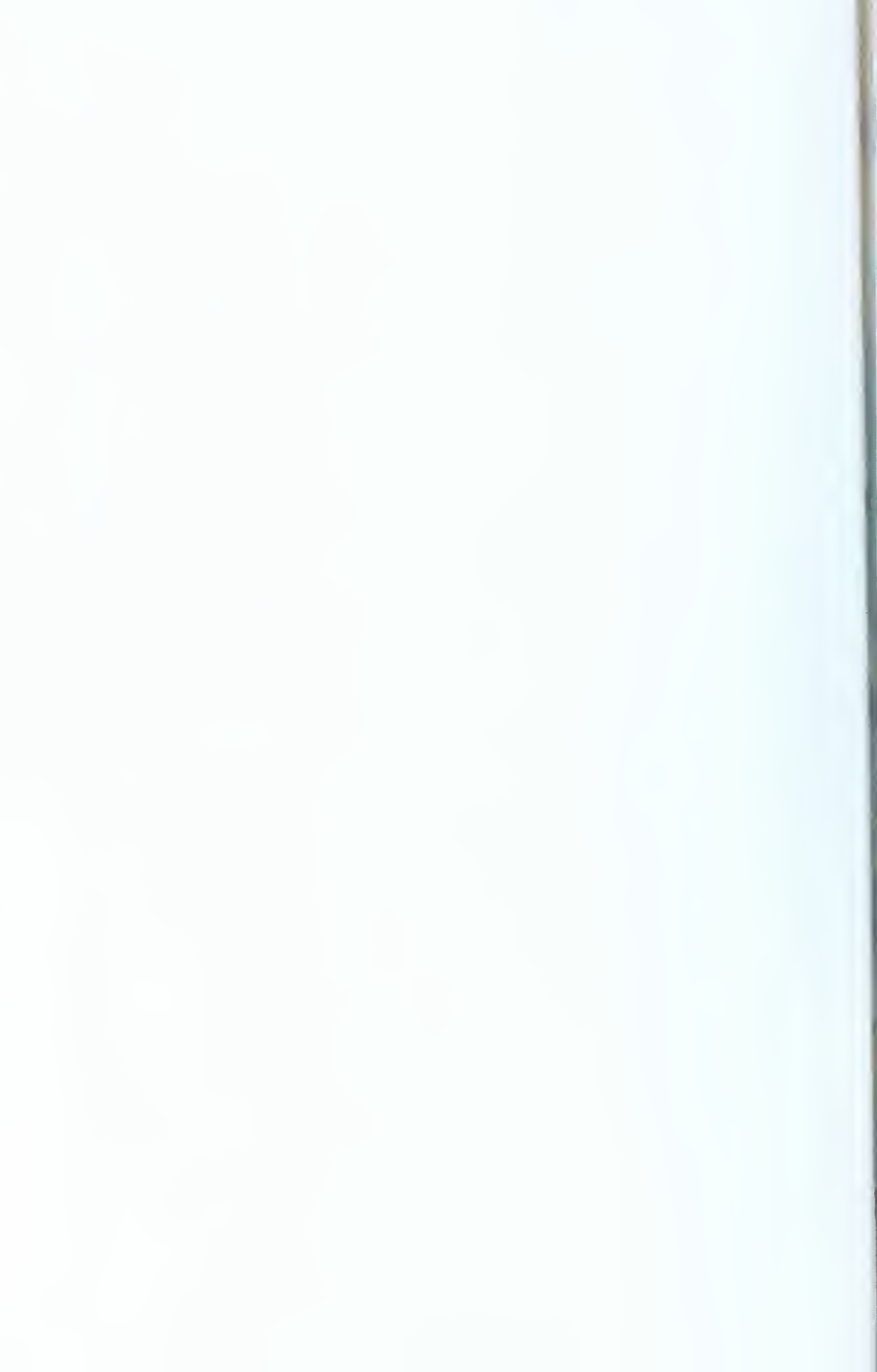
VOL. LXIV

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PENNSYLVANIA GAME NEWS

JANUARY 1993

ONE DOLLAR

BOB
SOPCHICK



PENNSYLVANIA GAME COMMISSION
**SOUTHCENTRAL
 REGION**
 PUBLIC AND LEASED LANDS

Outdoor Recreation Maps

To help outdoorsmen discover more of what Pennsylvania has to offer, the Game Commission has produced six "Outdoor Recreation Maps." Each multi-color 24 x 36-inch map covers one of the Commission's field regions. Highlighted are Game Lands, State Forests and Parks, and private lands enrolled in the Commission's public access programs. Also depicted are municipalities, roads, waterways, and — giving the map a three-dimensional appearance — 100-foot contour lines. Maps are printed on Tyvek, a tear-resistant, water-repellent material which will withstand years of hard use.

Each regional map costs \$4 delivered, and can be ordered from the Pennsylvania Game Commission, Dept. AR, 2001 Elmerton Avenue, Harrisburg, PA 17110-9797. If you are not sure of which maps you want, write for a PGC map order form.

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The First Line of Defense

FEATURED in this issue is the Game Commission's 1991-92 annual report, a status report, so to speak, with emphasis on the agency's achievements and milestones attained over the year.

Publishing this report, we believe, is important for several reasons. In *Game News*, it stands as a permanent record of what the agency has done. More importantly, it offers — to anybody and everybody who wants it — a complete accounting of the Game Commission.

Over the years this report has been published here, it has remained largely unchanged, except that it has gotten progressively longer. This year, however, like with many other aspects of the magazine (note the new typefaces in this issue) we tried to enhance the look of the annual report, to make it more visually appealing and easier to read. We also eliminated much of the repetitive material that typified past reports. We hope more people read and appreciate the information presented.

As Lantz Hoffman points out in the introduction to the Information & Education section, anti-hunting and anti-trapping threats are increasing with every passing day. To combat these threats, the Game Commission and other wildlife agencies are adopting a more proactive position by increasingly investing in efforts designed to reach nonhunting audiences — schools groups, civic organizations and other publics. Although we're beginning to reach new audiences, the steps seem largely inadequate when we consider the amount of anti-hunting and anti-trapping rhetoric foisted upon the public by the general media and our education system.

Reaching such groups with the facts about how hunting and trapping relate to scientific wildlife management principles is paramount to protecting these activities because it will be these groups — the nonconsumptive users — who will ultimately determine how wildlife management is conducted in the future.

Nevertheless, it's foolhardy to suggest that nonhunting publics, particularly students, should become more aware of wildlife conservation than hunters and trappers. Outdoorsmen must take the lead in spreading the message about hunting, trapping and wildlife management. One way to do this is by becoming involved in sportsmen's groups and allied conservation organizations.

On a more personal level, each hunter and trapper needs to become more knowledgeable about what wildlife management means. In this instance, through a better understanding of the Game Commission and its many programs, we sportsmen can better communicate — through our words and actions — what hunting, trapping and wildlife conservation are all about.

As this annual report clearly shows, the Game Commission is more than an organization that just sells hunting and trapping licenses and sets seasons and bag limits. The Game Commission is multifaceted and extremely successful in accomplishing a wide array of responsibilities. The agency provides services to not just sportsmen, but every Pennsylvanian.

Sure, we need the understanding and support of nonhunters, but it's the practitioners of the sports who must take command. Study this annual report, become more actively involved in natural resource issues, and pay attention to what's being taught in your local schools. In the end, the key to defeating anti-hunting and anti-trapping initiatives is through information and education, and in that regard, we're the first line of defense.

Bob Mitchell



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Pennsylvania Game Commission Annual Report Fiscal Year, 1991-92

EXECUTIVE OFFICE
Peter S. Duncan
Executive Director

The 1991-92 fiscal year was very productive. Major changes occurred in the Executive Office as well as in the agency's rules and regulations. Following the death of Paul

Weikel, the executive structure was reorganized to include two deputy executive directors. Dr. Steven A. Williams was selected to fill one of these positions. He's charged with coordinating the activities and programs among the six Harrisburg bureaus. A native Pennsylvanian, Williams previously served as an assistant director for the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife.

Donald C. Madl was selected for the other deputy position. A 30-year employee who served as Southwest Region director for 19 years, Don's primary focus is to coordinate agency programs among the six field regions.

Two major issues were addressed this fiscal year. First, the Commission mandated the wearing of fluorescent orange while hunting most species of wildlife. This was a difficult decision, but it's firmly believed the new regulation will provide safer hunting without affecting the quality of the hunt.

Second, the Commission worked diligently to alleviate deer damage problems. The pilot study introduced last fall should further reduce deer damage. The Commission is committed to continued progress on this issue.

Thanks to the Wild Resource Conservation Fund (Pennsylvania's income tax checkoff program) our river otter introduction project moved into the Allegheny and Youghiogheny drainages. The spring of 1992 also saw outstanding nesting and hacking success for bald eagles, ospreys and peregrine falcons.

Land acquisition, habitat enhancement projects, Project WILD and, we trust, our many other accomplishments serve as testimony to our commitment to active, scientific management in order to assure that future generations can enjoy equal or better opportunities for consumptive and nonconsumptive outdoor recreation.

LAND MANAGEMENT
Gregory J. Grabowicz
Director

"Biodiversity" has become a new buzzword in conservation circles. Many definitions are currently in use by professional resource managers and

citizens' groups. In some cases, state and federal land management programs are criticized as being short-sighted and insensitive to preserving biological diversity. Especially in relation to forest ecosystems, there is a growing tendency to equate no management with wise management. Natural ecosystems, however, do not remain static. Although often imperceptible, changes are continually occurring. As resource professionals, we cannot ignore these changes. We must implement sound management practices to ensure the needs of wildlife are not compromised.

he executive
structure was
organized to
include two
deputy executive
directors.



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*During the year,
Pennsylvania
received more
than \$7 million in
P-R funds.*

To that end, forested game lands are managed to sustain a wide variety of habitats. For farmland wildlife, 20,000 acres of game lands are actively farmed through sharecrop agreements designed to conserve soil fertility and produce wildlife food and cover. To complement these programs, our 200-member Food & Cover Corps carries out game land maintenance and habitat improvement projects.

In essence, our land acquisition and management programs have been developed to provide a variety of sustainable ecosystems and landscapes for the preservation of wildlife and wholesome outdoor recreation. And with the growing human population and escalating demands on the remaining open space, these goals will only become more important if we're to satisfy these needs in the future.

Federal-State Coordination

The Land and Water Conservation Fund Act Program is a program through which federal fees and royalties from offshore gas and oil leases are devoted to the purchase of key wildlife habitat areas. With \$340,984 obtained through this program, we purchased a 1772-acre tract in Wayne and Monroe counties. The tract is ideal for black bear, white-tailed deer, ruffed grouse, turkey and many nongame animals.

In concert with DER, controlled deer hunts were held at Tyler, Ridley Creek and Presque Isle state parks. The first park to have such a hunt was Ridley Creek. Since 1984, six hunts have been conducted there, resulting in 1,380 deer being harvested. Tyler State Park has had four hunts, with 729 deer taken. Presque Isle State Park has had three, with 206 deer taken. Although controversial, these hunts have proven to be efficient deer management tools, and in every instance the badly overbrowsed parks quickly began recovering.

Engineering

Four building construction projects were initiated under the Pennsylvania Conservation Corps (PCC) program. Ten dams located on game lands were inspected and formal inspection reports submitted to DER. Tests were arranged for 101 underground fuel storage tanks at 61 sites throughout the state to ensure compliance with recent requirements of state and federal law.

Federal Aid

The Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act (commonly called the Pittman-Robertson Act) continues to provide reliable funding for the acquisition, rehabilitation and restoration of wildlife habitat. Derived from excise taxes on sporting arms, ammunition and archery equipment, P-R funds are apportioned to states based upon land area, license sales and total population. Pennsylvania received \$7,107,551 during the fiscal year, more than any other state except for Texas and Alaska.

Public Access

Our public access programs continue to expand hunter access to private lands while protecting cooperators against unsportsmanlike acts. The Cooperative Farm-Game Program, begun in 1936, has 185 projects in 58 counties. Through it 21,486 landowners keep more than 2,493,000 acres open to hunting. In our Safety Zone Program we now have 8,730 cooperators, covering more than 1,391,000 acres. The



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1,516 acres were
acquired in 15
counties, bringing
total holdings to
1,358,029 acres.

Forest Game Cooperative Program has 588,000 acres. These programs do not give unlimited access; hunters should contact cooperating landowners for permission.

Ten-pound mixed seed packets were again given to cooperating landowners interested in devoting a little space for wildlife. The seed mixture of dwarf sorghum, millet, buckwheat and sunflower provides a good source of food for all wildlife and, if properly located, can provide relief from wildlife depredation upon field crops.

Managing Game Lands

During the fiscal year, Food & Cover Corps planted 1,759 acres of herbaceous openings with small grains and 1,137 acres in grass legume combinations — all of which were left standing for wildlife. Other treatments included mowing, 13,418 acres; liming, 1,620 acres; and fertilizing, 2,523 acres. Winter cuttings of woodland borders totaled 1,439 acres, and 18,889 fruit producing trees were pruned. New construction included 18 miles of road, 23 parking areas, 1,403 nesting structures and 1,567 bird houses. Under 294 sharecropping agreements, 20,000 game lands acres were farmed. From sharecroppers, for use in our game farms and related agency programs, we received 7,208 bushels of ear corn and 9,899 bushels of shelled corn. This doesn't include grain left standing for wildlife.

Howard Nursery

Howard Nursery provided 5,235,518 tree and shrub seedlings for habitat improvements on state game lands and other lands open to public hunting. Through the Planting for Wildlife Program, 225,705 tree and shrub seedlings were distributed to people interested in providing food and cover for wildlife. The nursery is growing 36 species of tree and shrub seedlings for wildlife management purposes.

Forestry

Trees on 13,390 acres of state game lands were scheduled for commercial and non-commercial forest management practices. To enhance forest regeneration, another 431 acres were sprayed to remove ferns, striped maple and beech brush.

Commercial timber sales on 10,411 acres amounted to \$7,902,975, an increase of \$869,805 over the previous year's receipts. The average return was \$759 per acre, an increase of \$46. During the year, these management activities yielded more than 33 million board feet of logs and 219,311 tons of pulpwood.

A road network sufficient to carry the heavy logging equipment and comply with the Clean Steams Act and other regulations was designed and construction supervised by the contract officers-in-charge. Logging contractors successfully completed 69 timber sale contracts during the year, improved 44 miles of haul roads, installed nine miles of new roads — which became food strips after seeding — and placed 160 culverts, at an estimated cost of \$466,405.

Land Acquisition

During the fiscal year, 11,516 acres were acquired in 15 counties, bringing the total of all Game Commission holdings to 1,358,029 acres on 288 separate game lands in 65 counties.



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As required by Act 20 of 1984, local government bodies receive \$.60 per acre in-lieu-of taxes. This year, these payments amounted to \$813,775, which was divided into proportional payments among the counties, school districts and townships where state game lands are located.

Environmental Planning and Habitat Protection

Minerals from game lands are often exchanged for land and for operational revenues. While many proposed exchanges are reviewed, only those environmentally sound are accepted. A prime feature of each approved project is the potential to reclaim project sites to increase the wildlife carrying capacity.

Last year 3,355 acres (valued at \$948,628) were acquired through coal lease-land exchange agreements, and revenues from coal, oil and gas production amounted to \$856,595. Therefore, minerals accounted for \$1,805,222 in revenue.

In cooperation with the Department of Environmental Resources and other commonwealth agencies, Game Commission personnel evaluated the wildlife impacts of highway relocations, flood control impoundments, proposed stream and wetland encroachments — all projects that require a state or federal permit. Major emphasis is placed on helping DER review applications for surface mining permits. The primary goal in this review process is to avoid unnecessary losses through early involvement and input in the planning process. Recommendations are made to avoid habitat losses, or to replace habitat values which will be unavoidably lost.

During 1991-92, 1,647 inquiries were reviewed. These include 268 applications for surface and deep mining permits, 80 highway projects, 35 solid waste applications, plus reviews of flood control projects, utility rights-of-way, wetland encroachments and community development block grants.

Wildlife Data Base

The Pennsylvania Fish and Wildlife Data Base is a computerized library of information on more than 900 animal species occurring in the commonwealth. This library is used to conduct wildlife impact assessments, permit reviews, wildlife research and land use planning. During this fiscal year 198 data searches were performed.

Searches	User	Group
140	(74%)	Consulting Firms
33	(17%)	Federal/State/Local Agencies
25	(12%)	Private Individuals/Groups

Environmental consulting firms comprised the largest user group. Endangered and threatened species information, general species occurrence lists, and habitat evaluation data were the most common types of information requested.

A related accomplishment is the development of a computer application to maintain land purchase records. In addition, State Game Land Wetland Inventory, Forest Wildlife Management Plan and Bat Hibernacula data bases were established.

Plans to implement a Geographic Information System (GIS) for state game lands is progressing. This pilot project is designed to demonstrate the applicability of a GIS to habitat management and wildlife planning.



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Every summer,
six wildlife techni-
cians conduct
counts of 16
species along 60
10-mile routes.

WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT
Calvin W. DuBrock
Director

Two divisions — Research and Propagation — make up the bureau. Personnel provide data used to monitor wildlife populations and harvest levels, evaluate habitat management techniques, recommend seasons and bag limits and management strategies, and raise pheasants for stocking. Bureau personnel represent the agency on the state Pesticide Advisory Board, Aquaculture Advisory Board and on several national and regional committees and organizations.

RESEARCH

This year the Research Division had 62 active studies. The Forest Wildlife and Furbearer sections had, respectively, 18 and 16 studies; Endangered Species and Protected Wildlife, 10; Waterfowl and Migratory Game Bird, 8; Farmland Wildlife, 7; and statistical/survey support, 3.

Staff also logged 112 man-days providing programs to sportsmen's clubs, schools and other groups, training to wildlife conservation officers and deputy trainees, and technical assistance to land managers and law enforcement officers.

The bureau is deeply indebted to the excellent support and assistance of our wildlife conservation officers, deputies, land managers, foresters, forest technicians, food and cover employees, and volunteers who assisted us over the past year.

Statistics & Surveys

Conducting surveys to estimate game harvests and monitor wildlife population trends is paramount to sound wildlife management. In addition to the Game Take and Furtaker Surveys (see the October 1992 *Game News*) we also coordinate federal surveys such as the Mourning Dove Call Count, Woodcock Singing Ground, and National Hunting, Fishing, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation surveys. The section also assists biologists with study designs, data analysis and presentation of research results.

Every summer, in our annual Upland Wildlife Trend Survey, six wildlife technicians conduct counts of 16 species along 60 10-mile routes. In 1991, highest counts were recorded for doves (5,732), rabbits (2,741) and deer (1,165).

WCOs conducted the Mourning Dove Call-Count Survey in June 1992, and the Woodcock Singing-Ground Survey in April-May 1992. These long-term, nationwide surveys indicate breeding populations of doves are stable, but that woodcock have declined over the past 25 years.

To keep biologists abreast of new techniques of population estimation and data analysis, a one-week statistical and computer training workshop was given to all staff biologists.

A survey of landowners participating in the 1991-92 special antlerless deer hunting season on deer-damaged farms indicate that more deer were harvested and more landowners were satisfied than during the first season, held in 1991. The number of participating landowners dropped slightly to 534 (574 participated the previous year), but the 27 hunting days (12 in 1991) resulted in the harvest of an estimated 3,853 deer on nearly 138,000 acres, by more than 29,000



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During the deer seasons, 31,727 deer were examined at processors. About 82% of antlered deer and 34% of adult females were 18 months old.

hunters. On average, 7.3 deer were harvested per farm, compared to 4.7 the year before. And 42 percent of the landowners were satisfied with the program, compared to 25 percent in 1991. Suggested improvements again centered on including more land and shifting the timing of the season — primarily to an antlerless deer harvest during buck season. Both of these suggestions were implemented on a pilot basis in four counties during the 1992-93 season.

Forest Wildlife

In 1991, the summer turkey survey and the first statewide turkey baiting survey were conducted by wildlife conservation officers. Summer turkey surveys indicated a statewide increase of 11.1 percent in turkey numbers from 1990 to 1991. Those results, along with fall turkey season extension recommendations, were prepared and submitted to the Commission in October.

An effort to measure elk reproduction and to develop a more cost-effective censusing procedure was begun in 1991. That year, 37 elk were captured and equipped with radio collars. Eleven of 17 radio-tagged females each produced a single calf, for a calving rate of 65 calves/100 cows. This rate is comparable to those reported for Western herds, but higher than the observed calf/cow ratios we find during our aerial censuses.

During a helicopter survey conducted the last week of January 1992, 33 of the 37 radio-tagged elk were located; 30 were in the area surveyed. Using the ratio of marked to unmarked elk observed during survey flights, biologists estimated that there were 183 elk in the population at that time. Details concerning the survey were published in the April 1992 *Game News* article, "Rethinking the Elk Survey."

Between February and June 1991, WCOs collected jaws from 1,941 female deer killed by vehicles and other causes, and also recorded the number and sex of the embryos they were carrying. These deer carried 2,216 embryos, for an in-utero reproductive rate of 120 embryos/100 females. About 37 percent of the pregnant does carried single embryos, 60 percent carried twins and 3 percent triplets. The in-utero ratio of males to females was 117:100.

During the deer seasons, 31,727 deer were examined at deer processors. About 82 percent of the antlered deer and 34 percent of the adult females were 18 months old. Adult females comprised 56 percent of the antlerless harvest, fawns the remainder. The ratio of male to female fawns in the antlerless harvest was 114:100, virtually the same as the in-utero rate measured in the spring.

During the 1991 3-day bear season, hunters took 1,687 bruins. Of those, 79 had been captured and tagged. Based on the total number of bears tagged, this gave a harvest rate of 22.7 percent. The average harvest rate from 1980 to 1991 is 19.9 percent, with a range of 13.1 to 27.7 percent. Annual harvest rates indicate the bear population has been held stable for the past five years. The 1991 preseason population estimate was approximately 7,500 bear. Additional details were published in the June 1992 *Game News* article, "1991 Bear Season Results."

Four grouse research projects are currently being conducted. Two are designed to evaluate long-term grouse responses to small clearcuts. Another involves the effects of long and short post-Christmas hunting



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Wildlife manage-
ment personnel
banded 3,523
mallards, 1,288
wood ducks and
104 black ducks
during the '91
banding period.

seasons. The 1992-93 season will be the 10th and final year for this project.

The 1991 flushing survey, started in 1965 to monitor long-term grouse population trends, provided an index value of 1.56 birds per hour. The highest annual grouse flushing rate since the survey began was 1.72 flushes per hour, in 1987, and the lowest was 1.04 in 1976.

Farmland Wildlife

Intensive habitat evaluations were conducted on 22 potential pheasant study sites. From these, six were selected for a study to evaluate if viable pheasant populations can be established through fall releases of Sichuan and ring-necked pheasants. Releases are scheduled to begin in the fall of 1993.

Spring population estimates on the six selected areas ranged from 3.2 to 0.2 pheasants per square mile. Three areas had densities below 1.0. In contrast, during the late 1960s and early '70s, areas with 36 or more birds per square mile were considered first-class pheasant range, and at that time more than 5 million acres in Pennsylvania met that standard. Currently, no such areas exist.

Sichuan hybrid releases continue to be monitored. Surveys at Letterkenny indicate the population stood at 8.6 birds per square mile in 1990, dropped to 2.8 in 1991, and increased slightly to 3.2 in 1992. At Mercer, levels were 11.2, 14.0 and 10.2.

Studies of spring- and fall-released Sichuan hybrid hens indicate that fall-released birds have three times the nesting success of ones released in the spring, largely because birds released in fall enjoy significantly greater cover density and food supplies, and because other prey species are available.

Fortunately, no evidence of quail heartworm or avian pox virus was found in the California quail released in Allegheny and Washington counties. We did find, however, a 40 percent infestation rate of a nematode parasite known as *Dispharynx nasuta*. Further investigations indicate that while benign in the California quail, this parasite is pathogenic to ruffed grouse and, possibly, juvenile pheasants. Based on these findings, all efforts to introduce California quail have been terminated and their protection withdrawn.

Waterfowl and Migratory Game Birds

Preseason duck banding continued, in cooperation with the Atlantic Flyway duck banding program. Banding information is used to determine timing and distribution of the duck harvest, survival, harvest rates and migration patterns. During the 1991 preseason banding period, 3,523 mallards, 1,288 wood ducks and 104 black ducks were banded.

Waterfowl breeding pair surveys, which determine trends in the northern half of the flyway, have been conducted experimentally since 1989 and became fully operational in 1992. Along with the mid-continent waterfowl surveys, they will be used to determine the status of breeding duck populations. The 1992 survey indicated a breeding mallard population of 58,000 pairs statewide, which is comparable to the previous year. Wood duck pairs (48,000) and individual Canada geese (95,000) each indicated continued upward trends.

Wintering waterfowl populations are surveyed each January, with



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A beaver survey conducted by WCOs in the fall of 1991 indicate a statewide population of 21,385 beavers.

all flyway states participating. These results, along with information from the banding project, are used to calculate reproduction and harvest figures in Pennsylvania and the Atlantic Flyway.

Last year, to examine population dynamics of resident and migrant Canada geese, neck bands with unique code sequences were used to mark individual geese that will be monitored throughout the Atlantic Flyway over the next three years.

So far, more than 3,000 birds have been banded in Pennsylvania, and more than 30,000 observations of neck-banded geese have been made in the Atlantic Flyway. A second study uses neck-banded geese to evaluate the transfer of nuisance geese to public hunting areas. The objective is to assess differences in survival and movement between translocated nuisance and resident geese and, we hope, provide a method of reducing goose problems while increasing hunting opportunities. To further address nuisance goose problems, the development and ultimate implementation of early and late goose seasons were initiated here.

Another cooperative effort involved a study of wood ducks, which are difficult to census because they are secretive and nest in forested habitats. During the spring of 1991, 104 nest boxes in the Pymatuning area were monitored. Nesting hens were banded and information on clutch size and nest success was collected. This information, along with hen call surveys in the same areas, will be used to evaluate nest box checks as a technique for monitoring breeding wood duck populations. Another cooperative research study, this one between the Game Commission and Penn State University, is examining nesting success, habitat use and brood survival of wood ducks in the Pocono region.

Woodcock research has continued, with 85 woodcock banded and another 10 fitted with radio transmitters. Research has shifted from the northeast part of the state to the northwest, to compare differences in the timing and pattern of migration. Earlier results from the northeast indicate our local birds remain in the state until mid-November, well after the passage of migrants. Woodcock singing ground surveys and banding results continue to show a depressed and declining breeding population throughout the eastern United States. These results led to further restrictions in hunting regulations for the 1992 hunting season.

Furbearers

During the fall of 1991, four coyotes were captured and instrumented to determine home range, dispersal, mortality and behavior. Two of the four were taken by hunters and trappers. Since 1990, three out of four instrumented juvenile coyotes have been taken during hunting and trapping seasons. Coyote harvests increased from 1,800 in 1990 to 3,700 in 1991.

A beaver survey conducted by WCOs in the fall of 1991 indicate a statewide population of 21,385 beavers. To keep the population static, a harvest goal was set at 4,863. During the December-January trapping season, 4,107 beaver were tagged. The season was not reopened in March because the harvest reached more than 70 percent of the goal — the threshold set for reopening. Beaver complaints decreased in 1991 due to drought conditions.

At 20,215, the number of furtaker licenses sold in Pennsylvania

leveled off in 1991, after 10 years of decline from 69,000 in 1981. The number of furbearers taken in 1991 increased due to a 25 to 30 percent increase in fur prices.

Bobcat population and habitat models continue to be developed. From 6 to 12 radio-tagged bobcats in northern Lycoming County are being monitored to determine home range size, habitat use and mortality. Since this study began in 1986, 54 radio-collared bobcats have been followed.

The otter restoration project should be completed in 1993. Plans call for a total release of 20 to 25 otters in Tionesta Creek in Forest County, and 20 to 30 in the Youghiogeny drainage.

Endangered Species & Protected Wildlife

Biological diversity is the variety of life and processes that link plants, animals, soils, air and water into ecological systems. At its simplest, biodiversity conservation is "saving all the pieces." Saving functional healthy landscapes and ecosystems (all the pieces) is basic to sustaining the quality of human life.

A primary goal is to *prevent* species from declining, and an important strategy for achieving this goal is to identify species population trends. When declining species have been identified, research and management efforts can be prioritized.

The Allegheny cave squirrel (also known as the eastern woodrat) has suffered widespread declines in the northeastern United States. Numerous sites in eastern Pennsylvania that once supported woodrat colonies no longer do so. Since May 1990, we visited 32 sites that had been but are no longer inhabited by woodrats. Surveyors, however, did find 56 active sites distributed in 11 counties. This included 51 new sites. Especially significant was the finding of occupied sites in eastern Pennsylvania, including colonies in the Delaware Water Gap, Lehigh River Valley, and on the south and east slopes of Stony and Sharp mountains. Together, these make Pennsylvania the last stronghold of Allegheny cave squirrels in the entire northeastern United States.

We're still searching for least shrew populations, another endangered species. Like many grassland inhabitants, this shrew may be a victim of modern agriculture. Since 1988, 20,461 trap-nights at 80 sites have failed to yield a single specimen. In the past, barn owl pellets (regurgitated remains of prey) have contained the remains of least shrews. We are again looking at this method for locating least shrews here. The public can help. Anyone aware of barn owl roosting or nesting sites should contact the PGC (at 717/787-5529). We will visit active sites and collect pellets.

In the fourth of a five-year survey, volunteers completed 56 bat surveys in 33 counties. The average high count of bat passes was 100 (range 0 to 651 passes). In the future, these same sites can be surveyed again and a baseline inventory (five years and over 600 survey nights) will be available for comparison. Had a similar survey been undertaken last century, researchers today would have a much better understanding of "normality" regarding Pennsylvania's pre-pesticide bat populations.

Additionally, volunteers are looking for unusually large (100 or more) concentrations of little brown bats in buildings (churches and barns). We hope to monitor 30 such sites where their presence is not



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A statewide survey of colonial waterbird nests, scheduled every five years, counted 1,123 great blue heron nests in 29 active colonies.

objectionable. So far we have 18. If you know of any such concentration, give us a call.

For the second year in a row, bald eagle, osprey and peregrine falcon populations experienced record nesting success. The increase in nesting bald eagles was especially dramatic. Thirteen pairs were active, 11 of which successfully fledged young. A total of 19 young eagles fledged, 75 percent more than in 1991. Three new nest sites were discovered, and a healthy average of 1.5 young fledged per active nest. Bald eagles now nest in four of the six Game Commission regions. New locations include Tionesta (Forest County), Shohola Lake (Pike County), and a site in Lancaster County.

The 1992 Winter Bald Eagle Survey also showed an increase. Checking 83 locations, 23 observers counted 40 bald eagles. An additional 53 eagles were counted along the Delaware River bordering Pennsylvania, for a total of 93 bald eagles in and adjoining Pennsylvania last January.

Peregrine falcons experienced a successful nesting season with seven pairs fledging young. The pair in Pittsburgh fledged three young, and bridge locations in southeastern Pennsylvania produced five. Three young raised from eggs obtained from the Girard Point Bridge were released at the Fulton Bank building in Harrisburg. Two fledged from a hack box; the remaining young injured a wing and was brought in for rehabilitation. Adult peregrines were observed at only one cliff site.

Nine osprey nests were again located in the Pocono region. Pairs also nested in locations similar to last year on the lower Susquehanna in Lancaster County, and in Somerset County. A new nest was found in York County. Hacking continued at the Tioga-Hammond Reservoir, where 13 young were successfully released.

Thanks to a federal grant provided to survey habitat where shrikes had recently been observed, last summer two loggerhead shrike nests were found. (See "Return of the Loggerheads" in last November's *Game News*.) Each nest fledged four young. As a result, the loggerhead shrike was moved from the extirpated list to the state endangered species list.

In June 1991, 38 Grassland Breeding Bird Survey routes were run. Of these, 31 had been run previously by the same individuals. Such a high level of observer continuity greatly enhances this long-term trend analysis. The three most frequently reported species, occurring in 14 to 26 percent of all stops, were field sparrow, eastern meadowlark and killdeer. Field sparrow, meadowlark and savannah sparrow, occurred at 7.8 to 14 birds per route, making them the most abundant species.

In 1991, through our Cavity Nester Cooperator program, volunteers completed nest production forms covering 1,812 boxes. Occupancy of bluebird type boxes (73 percent) was slightly lower than the previous year (79 percent), primarily due to a decrease in use by tree swallows. The number of young fledged per bluebird-type box for all species (3.7) was up from 1990 (3.3) despite the severe drought.

A statewide survey of colonial waterbird nests, scheduled every five years, was conducted in April and May 1992. A total of 1,123 great blue heron nests were counted in 29 active colonies. A third of previously occupied colonies had been abandoned or could not be found. Two-thirds of relocated colonies showed fewer active nests than on the previous survey. Thirteen, or half, of the colonies surveyed in



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1992 were newly located that year. Nearly one-third of all the nests located were in only two large colonies in Mercer County.

A new survey of nesting wetland birds was conducted in Crawford County in May 1992. Eight species were recorded, including one state endangered species (black tern), two threatened species (American and least bittern), and two candidate species (pied-billed grebe and marsh wren).

Agency staff contributed to the publication of the *Annotated Checklist of the Birds of Pennsylvania*, a 60-page booklet containing seasonal and regional abundance graphs, and habitat annotations for all species found here.

PROPAGATION

The Commission operates five game farms and distributed more than 237,270 ring-necked pheasants during the year. For the last several years we have emphasized producing pheasants better prepared for survival and providing sporting recreational opportunities. Human imprinting is avoided, and pheasants are raised free-flying in covered, 1- to 6-acre holding pens that contain natural habitats comparable to preferred release sites.

Each county's pheasant allocation is based on the available acreage of suitable pheasant habitat on public hunting land. State game lands receive top priority; properties enrolled in the Commission's public access programs receive the balance. The birds are stocked by our land management personnel and wildlife conservation officers.

Hen pheasants are released in September to provide dog training opportunities, and, we hope, augment natural production. Of the hunting season allocation, 40 percent was released during the week prior to the opening day; 35 percent during the first full week of the season, and the remainder during the second week.

In December 1991, 11,657 birds were stocked in the northern zone to provide late season hunting opportunities for sportsmen. Because of the positive response we received to this pilot program, the late season stocking was approved for 1992-93.

Spring breeders were released during May and June on state game lands and cooperative public access lands, after a sufficient number of eggs for the fall allocation had been attained. These birds may also reproduce after release in suitable habitat.

In addition to those releases, 6,760 ringnecks were raised and released by 23 sportsmen's organizations participating in the day-old chick program. These chicks are released locally on lands open to

public hunting. Additionally, 2,812 chicks and 324 eggs were given to schools and organizations for educational projects. A total of 21,850 surplus day-old hen chicks and 20,430 surplus eggs were sold for a total of \$21,211.

In March 1992, our first shipment of Sichuan pheasant offspring were returned to Michigan. Our agreement with Michigan stipulates that we return 200 (100 males, 100 females) offspring for five breeding seasons. In addition to the birds agreed upon, 237 surplus males were included. We transported all Sichuan pheasants to Michigan's Grass

	Hens	Cocks
September releases	32,950	—
Hunting season & releases	39,942	128,989
Late season releases	11,287	370
Spring breeders	22,087	1,645



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Lake area release site, located between Ann Arbor and Jackson.

Of the 5,958 Sichuan offspring produced in 1992, 100 day-old Sichuan cocks and 100 ringnecks were provided to Penn State University to evaluate the nutritional requirements of Sichuans.

ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

Kenneth L. Hess
Director

This bureau is comprised of the Personnel Services (Personnel, Labor Relations, Library), Hunting License, Automotive and Procurement, Office Services, and

Training divisions, plus the Ross Leffler School of Conservation. Generally speaking, this bureau coordinates and manages the agency's approximately 700 permanent and 75 seasonal employees throughout their careers.

Training

The agency's Ross Leffler School of Conservation is widely renowned, and we're proud to report that on February 29, 1992, the 21st class, comprised of 23 wildlife conservation officers, was graduated from the school. The 22nd class is scheduled to enroll on May 16, 1993. Our rigorous curriculum consists of 38 weeks of classroom instruction, field exercises and on-the-job training.

In addition to the periodic classes for WCO trainees, this bureau develops, evaluates and organizes the training programs for all levels of employees, including our volunteer deputy wildlife conservation officers. Our training facility regularly provides instruction on a variety of technical subjects related to wildlife management, as well as ongoing training for managers, supervisors, clerical and other administrative support personnel. Additionally, an out-service training program is in place that enables employees to attend job-related seminars and courses at colleges, universities and other training sources.

Attendant to training is the agency's library, which is open to not only Commission employees but also the general public. The library contains scientific, technical and general reading material, most of which is related to wildlife, wildlife management, and hunting and trapping.

License Sales

This division appoints and supervises approximately 1,100 issuing agents comprised of county treasurers and private businesses. Monthly reports are received and audited with accompanying revenue (\$25,736,299 total) deposited into the Game Fund. The License Division oversees agents to ensure compliance with Commission regulations and policies. Selected agencies at a few key locations in Ohio and New Jersey have been appointed and continue to serve our nonresident hunters.

License sales through 6/30/92

Adult Resident	911,839
Junior Resident	103,008
Senior Resident	63,448
Landowner Resident	2,699
Nonresident Adult	72,565
Nonresident Junior	2,359
Nonresident 7-Day	4,207
Archery	296,244
Muzzleloader	106,372
Antlerless Deer	838,462
Adult Resident Furtaker	16,664
Junior Resident Furtaker	1,977
Senior Resident Furtaker	1,365
Nonresident Adult Furtaker	152
Nonresident Junior Furtaker	1
Resident Bear	87,193
Nonresident Bear	2,275
Senior Lifetime	2,776
Senior Lifetime Furtaker	56
Total	2,513,662



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LAW ENFORCEMENT

J.R. Fagan
Director

Administration

During the fiscal year, officers issued 8,446 written warnings for minor infractions of the Game & Wildlife Code, and handled 9,907 prosecutions, which resulted in \$1,969,939 in penalties. There were 5,378 cases settled on Field Receipts and 4,529 handled by our courts.

For violating the Code, 1,594 persons lost the privilege to hunt and trap in Pennsylvania. Of the revocations, 374 were mandated by law while 1,220 were the result of Commission action.

Communications

The purchase, licensing and installation of a new microwave link in the Southcentral Region has been completed. This link connects the Huntingdon office to the Pennsylvania State Police tower site on Piney Ridge, which then interfaces with the rest of the region's microwave system. This eliminates the recurring cost of radio control link telephone lines. Efforts to completely upgrade the Northeast Region's radio system are expected to be completed by October 1993.

Bear Damage

Based on field reports, 97 beehives, 14 head of livestock, 39 rabbits and 182 poultry were destroyed by bears. Damage claims amounted to \$11,538, down \$8,738 from the previous year. Where applicable, 14 bear deterrent fences were provided to beehives owners to prevent further loss, at a cost to the agency of \$2,089, down \$1,297 from the year before.

Deputy WCOs

We're all fortunate to have approximately 1,000 men and women serving as deputy wildlife conservation officers. These volunteer officers assist salaried officers with a wide variety of duties. With districts averaging 335 square miles, and with thousands of people per district, the varied responsibilities of a wildlife conservation officer are difficult for one person to accomplish.

Throughout the years, the agency has trained this group to be wildlife management professionals. Coordinated at district and region levels, training includes a comprehensive understanding of law enforcement, legal procedures, wildlife management concepts, public relations, unarmed self-defense, firearms use and a host of other related functions.

For the third year, a 5-day basic training and orientation class was held for new deputies at the training school. In 1991, 88 new officers were exposed to this week-long training regimen.

Deterrent Fencing

During the year, 19 applications for deer/elk deterrent fencing were received, and of those, 15 were approved. All materials were supplied, and in the seven instances where construction was a responsibility of the agency, the fences were erected. Construction of the remaining eight are the responsibility of the individual landowners.

Administrative Hearings

During the year, 80 individuals requested administrative hearings.

*Officers handled
9,907 prosecutions;
5,378 were settled on
Field Receipts and
4,529 were handled by
the courts.*



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Of 122 applicants, 58 passed the agency's taxidermy exam and became licensed to practice in Pennsylvania.

With nine failing to appear, of the 71 cases heard, 65 were reviews of the revocation periods imposed by the Commission. At the conclusion of the hearings, 61 remain as ordered, one was reduced, and three had their hunting/trapping privileges restored. The remaining involved the recall of two hunting license issuing agents; two deputy wildlife conservation officer actions; and two denials of special permits.

Firearms Auction

A firearms auction was conducted in September 1991. On the block were 144 firearms and bows, along with 25 spotlights and knives. There were 431 registered bidders and \$28,351 was raised.

Special Permits

More than 4,600 special permits were processed during the year. In addition to the standard permits, more than 200 special use permits were issued for various activities involving wildlife. Fees collected for these permits exceeded \$185,000.

Taxidermy Examination

Two examinations were conducted during the year to test the abilities and techniques of aspiring taxidermists. Of the 122 applicants, 58 passed the exam and were licensed as a Pennsylvania taxidermist. The 5-member examining board provided professional guidance and service to those who took the extensive examination.

Rehabilitation Symposium

The Sixth Annual Wildlife Rehabilitation and Education Symposium was held in November 1991. Sponsored by Wildlife Rehabilitation Council and the Game Commission, it provided attendees with basic wildlife rehabilitation and treatment procedures, as well as some specific seminars on wildlife care and handling techniques.

INFORMATION & EDUCATION Lantz Hoffman Director

Times have been challenging and exciting for the bureau. Turkey hunting safety and the attendant implementation of new fluorescent orange

regulations greatly taxed the bureau's resources over the past months, but we're confident the right course was taken and that the sport will be more safe.

This fiscal year saw the completion of the agency's first feature video production, "On the Trail of Pennsylvania's Black Bears." This 140-minute production highlights the agency's black bear research and management efforts. Sales have been phenomenal and it has already garnered several national and international awards. Shorter versions for broadcasting and educational purposes are being produced.

A new project WILD coordinator, expansion of our Public Information Division, and adoption of desktop publishing for *Game News* are three more major accomplishments.

As welcome as these advancements are, we must continue to upgrade our educational and public information outreach programs because efforts to undermine trapping, hunting and other sound



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wildlife management practices are becoming more intense with each passing day.

Historically, wildlife conservation agencies have ignored animal rights activists, figuring the movement would eventually go away. The unfortunate fact is, however, that animal rights groups are more prevalent than ever. More than 400 such organizations exist, with more than 1.5 million members in the top four groups alone. Last year these organizations raised more than \$250 million, a ten-fold increase since 1982.

As the Commission prepares to take a more proactive stance against those who would rob us of our outdoor heritage, we as sportsmen also need to take a hard look at ourselves. Often we are our own worst enemy when dealing with the anti-hunting threats. Old traditions just won't wash anymore. As columnist Ted Kerasote wrote in the September *Sports Afield*, "Hunting may be a great tradition, but slavery, burning witches and shooting buffalos from trains were traditions too."

We ought not to hesitate or be ashamed to tell the truth. Death is death no matter how it comes, in the slaughterhouse or in the field. It's true that, among animals like deer, hunting is the only current practical solution to population control. It's also true that only hunting puts money in the wildlife management coffer, funds agencies use to buy and develop more habitat and perform vital research that benefits land and wildlife — game and nongame alike.

The key here is that there are better avenues to battle the extremists, but they're avenues we've only begun to explore. If we're to stand up to the rightists rationally, scientifically and intellectually, and convince millions of nonhunters that hunting and trapping are legitimate and necessary recreational activities, then we need to change some of our thinking, too.

More importantly, only a very narrow window of opportunity still exists if we're to salvage the sports from these slanderous campaigns. All wildlife agencies must allocate a much larger percentage of their human and financial resources to inform and educate those non-traditional publics. These are the people we must have as allies in the coming battles over where and when — and even if — hunting and trapping are to continue into the 21st century, and every sportsman needs to become actively involved as well.

Conservation Education

Project WILD, the Pennsylvania Waterfowl Management Stamp and Print Program, and the Working Together for Wildlife fine art print series each celebrated its 10th anniversary this fiscal year.

With 73 workshops held and 1,769 educators attending, Project WILD had an especially exciting and productive year. Since the program began, 8,240 educators have been trained to use Project WILD. Our cadre of 257 trained volunteers is anxious to share the program with anyone interested in educating our youth about wildlife and the importance of habitat.

Plans for the coming year include starting a Project WILD newsletter, establishing minimum requirements for facilitators, initiating programs in urban areas and developing contacts for school environmental education site programs.

Statewide, agency personnel presented nearly 2,000 conservation



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The volume of news releases going out to some 600 media sources continued to increase, nearly doubling the numbers of just a few years ago.

education programs, reaching 150,000 students and educators. Included in this total are school programs, teacher workshops, and various civic and conservation related youth programs.

Nearly 5,000 people attended the popular wildlife lectures at Middle Creek and Pymatuning, and 9,000 attended the Middle Creek Wildlife Art Show, which features many of the state's top artists.

Bob Sopchick of York won the 10th anniversary waterfowl management stamp design contest. His entry, selected from a field of 40 paintings, features a pair of Canada geese on a beaver pond and exemplifies wetlands preservation — the reason why the Pennsylvania "duck" stamp program was established. Since the program's inception more than \$1.1 million has been raised allowing for the purchase of more than 4,000 acres of wetlands.

The 1992 Working Together for Wildlife fine art print, the 10th in the series, features a strutting ruffed grouse by Taylor Oughton of Jamison. More than \$1 million has been raised through this program. Attesting to its popularity, the 1992 WTFW patch, featuring the ruffed grouse, sold out less than 10 months after going on sale.

Money raised through WTFW supports our bald eagle, osprey and river otter reintroduction projects, and is also used for monitoring bird and mammal species of special concern. The 1993 Working Together for Wildlife fine art print features a black bear by Bob Sopchick. His entry was chosen from a very impressive field of 49 paintings and is featured on this month's *Game News* cover.

Public Information Division

The division's role in dealing with the news media on both a state and national level continues to grow. The need to fully inform the public of the agency's many and varied programs depends on the cooperation and understanding of the news media.

That cooperation is gained through one-on-one dealings with reporters writing for small, rural-based weekly newspapers, to staff writers and reporters with major, metropolitan papers, wire services, and television and radio stations.

The division's move to produce comprehensive photo-feature news releases is fully on line. An average of one photo-feature a month was produced during the year. Subjects ranged from turkey hunting safety to problems on state game lands.

To answer the critical requirement for nearly instant communications with the news media, a program through which news releases and responses to quickly developing questions can be transmitted electronically to news rooms throughout the state was put on line.

Several news conferences were successfully conducted, one in Harrisburg on the highly popular peregrine falcon hacking program, and another in the Bedford area, in cooperation with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, about a new federal wetland restoration program.

Coordinated news releases were put together in advance of major law enforcement operations conducted in several regions of the state. These included the filing of charges in a major crackdown on the commercial sale of illegal black bears and bear parts in the northeast; large scale illegal taking of white-tailed deer and other game species in the southwest; and the illegal sale of live foxes and mounted birds in the southeast.

The volume of news releases going out to some 600 media sources continued to increase, nearly doubling the numbers of just a few years ago. While the Game Commission relies most heavily on the outdoor writing arm of the media to tell its story, increasing cooperation and information support is being provided to general staff reporters in both the print and electronic fields. It is now quite common to find a Game Commission program or employee featured in a front news section of a paper. Examples include the *Philadelphia Inquirer* feature on WCO Richard Shire and the front page coverage of law enforcement operations in Somerset County and the Poconos.

Hunter-Trapper Education

Turkey hunting safety and the implementation of new fluorescent orange requirements highlighted the fiscal year. As this issue went to press, the new regulations seemed to be well-accepted among sportsmen and, thankfully, the number of turkey hunting accidents had dropped dramatically.

In calendar year 1991 we held 913 classes and trained 43,940 students, up from the 40,930 we trained in 1990. The year also saw 151 new sportsmen become volunteer instructors, bringing out total complement to 3,098.

To help instructors, 53 instructor training sessions were held, and 1,000 instructors attended. Furthermore, 32 instructors participated in a comprehensive, week-long workshop at the training school. Part of the curriculum was the NRA's "Live Firing in Hunter Education" program, in which attendees were shown how to set up and conduct a safe rifle and shotgun range for students. They also completed the NRA Turkey Hunter Clinic.

Pennsylvania was selected by the Hunter Education Association to represent the 20 millionth hunter education student trained in North America. Veteran Cumberland County HTE instructor Gifford Briner represented the 51,000 instructors throughout the United States and Canada, while two of his students, Audrey Briner and Matt Nailor, symbolized the 20 million students who've completed a hunter education course.

During the year, 73 individuals were presented with SPORT Ethics Awards as a tribute to their active involvement in promoting sportsmanship and ethics. The second year of the SPORT essay contest saw 322 students submit essays on "What Being a Safe Responsible Hunter Means to Me." The winners and their winning essays were featured in the July 1992 *Game News*.

Again in 1992, we gave every Hunter-Trapper Education student a copy of *Game News*, along with a special offer to subscribe for one year for only \$5 — almost half off the regular subscription price. While we certainly are glad to receive many new subscribers through this offer, it's also important, we feel, to simply make more people aware of what *Game News* has to offer.

Game News

The past year has been enjoyable and exciting for the *Game News* staff. Entering the realm of desktop publishing, we've been able to enhance the look of the magazine, shorten our production schedule, publish on a more timely basis, and even cut production costs. All



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Our fundamental goal is to help agency personnel perform their duties better and more economically by using automated tools.

these aspects, coupled with the switch from an uncoated to a coated recycled paper, have greatly enhanced the magazine.

Aside from improving the appearance of *Game News*, we've also worked to enhance its content. As many people have noticed, the "Conservation News" section has been expanded to include more timely and informative information about the Game Commission. In the past year or so we've also published many articles about wildlife research, habitat management and other agency-related subjects.

We're proud of what's been accomplished over the past year, and we're looking forward to implementing even better and more exciting changes to come.

MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEMS

Lyle M. Koons, Jr.
Director

This bureau coordinates the agency's use of computer technology in, we hope, the most efficient and cost-

effective manner. Our fundamental goal is to help agency personnel perform their duties better by using automated tools.

During the year, we installed a new programming language known as XGEN, which enables us to more quickly create or change computer screens, programs and systems.

Our Time & Activity Reporting System now accepts payroll records on magnetic tape from the Central Management Information Center (CMIC), which allows us to more quickly and accurately track agency expenditures. Just one benefit from this new accounting system is that it lets us obtain Pittman-Robertson reimbursements more quickly, ultimately giving us more interest income.

By the time this report is published, we should have our Data Communications network in place. This will eliminate one of two telephone lines in each region office, and will also save time because region office staff, right from their desks, will have direct access to not only our mainframe computer, but also the State Police and CMIC computers. These savings will pay for the network within two years.

Four major improvements for administering license issuance and sales were implemented: We changed programs to speed up printing of the letters to agents; converted the Senior Lifetime License Subsystem to our new programming language; added Social Security and Federal I.D. numbers to commercial agent records for faster tracking and reporting; and made provisions for the Federal Migratory Bird Harvest Information Program, which has since been postponed.

Through the Employee Training Records System, we can now provide instant access about mandated safety training, management training and special skills training for any individual employee or for the entire personnel complement.

A Post Net barcode printer and microcomputer was installed in our mailroom. This maintains specialized mailing lists and, for large mailings, also allows for the downloading of lists from the mainframe computer. This technology saves about four cents per first class letter.

For the Bureau of Wildlife Management, we improved both our Game-Take Survey and Furtaker Survey reporting, and also implemented a system to track experimental Goose Season Permits.

We are now using the computer to provide each district officer with



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a list of outstanding warrants, which is helping us collect overdue fines. This year, we will also be working with the Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts and the District Justice Automation Project to improve the revenue flow from fines into the Game Fund and to update our time-payment schedules. In addition, our Special Permits computer system is being modernized to provide current and historical information on permittees and their activities.

Timber marking crews will soon be equipped with hand-held data recorders. These devices record information from a bar-code template and store data until it can be uploaded to a microcomputer. When a sale is completely tallied, board foot and volume tables can be quickly calculated. Literally days of hand calculations and error corrections have been eliminated by using this system.

Survey crews also are using hand-held data recorders to collect and plot land surveys. The meets and bounds of a tract are recorded, the plot is verified for accuracy, acreage is calculated and monumentation is documented, all by simply connecting these devices to laser transits. In essence, this allows us to conduct land surveys much faster and more accurately than ever before.

Finally, *Game News* is being produced using the latest in desktop publishing. The flexibility in format changes and shortened lead times are evident now, and more improvements will certainly come. This computerization has resulted in a savings of \$5,000 per issue, which will allow us to recover our investment in less than a year.

Through the systematic application of computer technology, nearly every facet of the agency's operations is being conducted in a more efficient and cost-effective manner than ever before.

Actual revenue collected and credited to the Game Fund during the 1991-92 fiscal year was \$50,458,518, an increase of \$1,572,748 or 3.2 percent over last year's actual cash receipts.

PGC FINANCIAL REPORT
July 1, 1991 to June 30, 1992
Ross E. Starner, Comptroller

The Balance Sheet and the Statement of Unreserved Fund Balance were prepared in accordance with Generally Accepted

Accounting Principles (GAAP). The unreserved/undesignated balance in the Game Fund on June 30, 1992, computed on a GAAP basis, was \$47,814,838, an increase of \$1,817,355. This increase is primarily due to revenues earned in excess of expenditures for fiscal year 1991-92.

Total fixed assets reported by the Game Commission as of June 30, 1992, were \$74,678,478. Fixed assets are reported at cost or estimated historical cost; no depreciation is provided. Donated fixed assets are recorded at fair market value at the time of donation.

The state's fixed asset accounting system threshold for reporting machinery and equipment increased from \$15,000 to \$20,000 effective July 1, 1991. This accounting change resulted in a reduction of \$2,178,997 in the machinery and equipment fixed asset category.

All other schedules included in this report were prepared on a cash basis combined with an encumbrance budgetary system, and as such are consistent with that of the previous year.

Actual revenue collected and credited to the Game Fund during the 1991-92 fiscal year was \$50,458,518, an increase of \$1,572,748 or 3.2 percent over last year's actual cash receipts. The most significant revenue increase was in Federal Pittman-Robertson reimbursements which increased by \$1,521,497 or 25.3 percent. The increase was



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Expenditures and commitments for the current executive authorization totaled \$48,494,202, an increase of \$5,172,402 from last year.

primarily due to expediting the reimbursement of funds from the federal government. Interest on securities and deposits increased by 14.9 percent or \$561,202. Funds were placed in long term investments which produced higher yields. Sale of timber and other wood products increased by \$869,796 or 12.4 percent due to increased market prices as well as an increase in timber being sold.

Revenues from wildlife promotional publications and materials increased by \$274,218 or 364.2 percent, reflecting the sale of the video "On The Trail of Pennsylvania's Black Bears." This presentation was a culmination of two years of microphone and camera footage, as well as ongoing bear research. Offsetting these increases was a decrease in game law fines of \$754,348. In 1991, PGC received an exemption from participating in the financing of the statewide judiciary computer system, which resulted in a significant refund to game law fines in fiscal year 90-91. In addition, other miscellaneous revenue is down in fiscal year 91-92 as compared to the past fiscal year due to the refund of State Workmen's Insurance Fund premiums received in fiscal year 90-91.

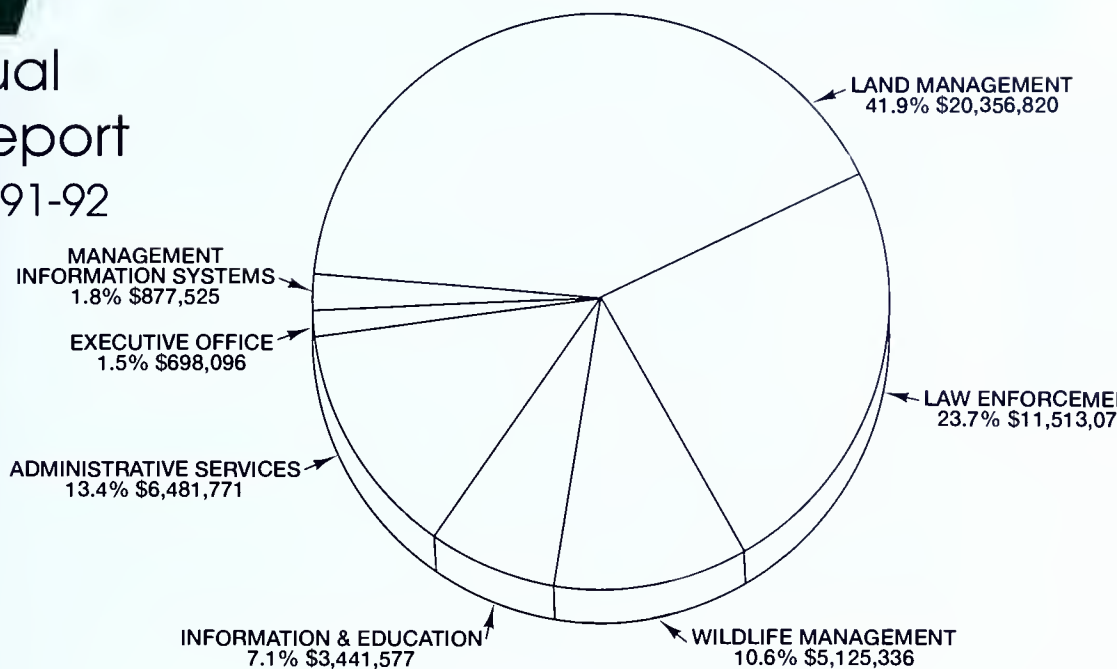
Actual expenditures and commitments for the current executive authorization totaled \$48,494,202, an increase of \$5,172,402 from last year. The major increases to expenditures were salaries, wages and benefits, up \$3,180,864. During 1991-92, the Mellon Bill retirees caused an increase in annual and sick leave payout totaling \$376,000. The wildlife conservation officer training class held in fiscal year 91-92 increased wage expenses \$300,000. Other state share benefits that increased an aggregate of \$1,359,000, were annuitant's health care, workman's compensation coverage, and employee hospitalization and health and welfare expenses.

Purchases of motor vehicles increased \$1,844,284, while the purchase of equipment and machinery increased primarily due to \$389,000 in equipment for agricultural needs. There had been little activity in these areas the previous year. Offsetting these increases was a decrease in land purchases, down \$1,037,306.

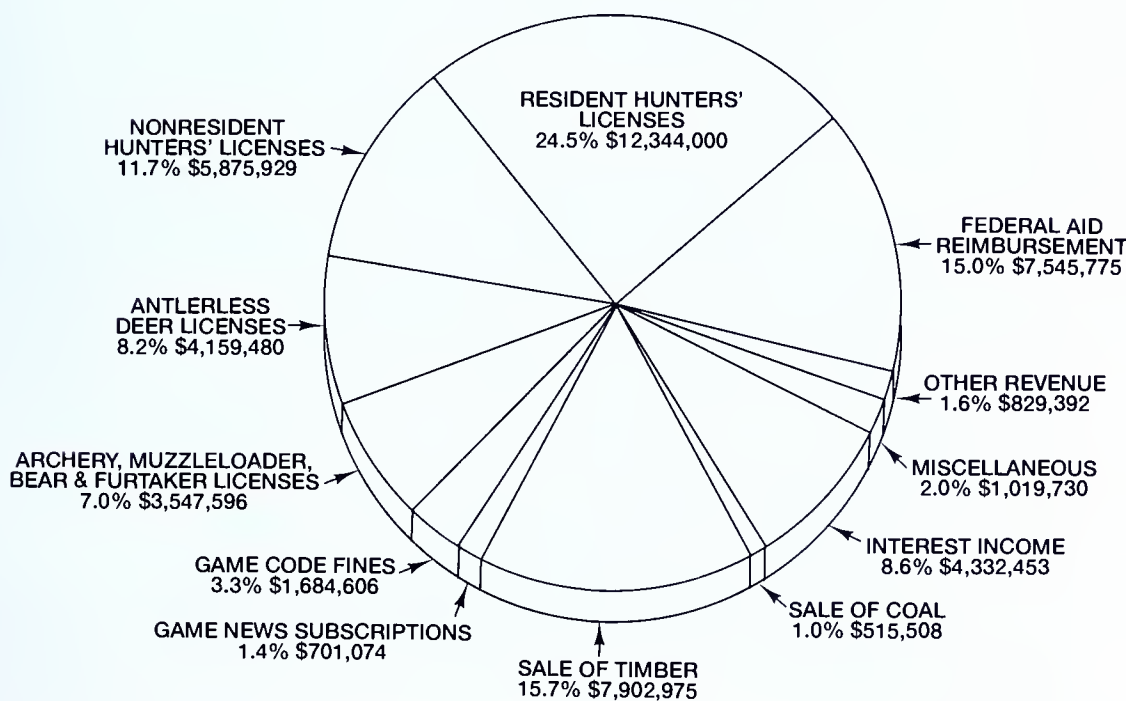
The Game and Wildlife Code stipulates that not less than \$1.25 from each resident hunter's paid license fee shall be used solely for the selection, restoration, rehabilitation and improvement of all land under the control of the Commission, to provide and improve habitat for the purpose of producing natural propagation of wildlife. The number of resident licenses sold during the 1991-92 fiscal year, as reported by the Game Commission, totaled 1,081,071. This mandated that a minimum of \$1,351,339 be expended for the above purposes. The agency actually expended \$2,420,969 and committed \$216,823 during the fiscal year for these purposes, for a total of \$2,637,792 — an excess of \$1,286,453 over the law's requirement.

The code also states that \$2 of each antlerless license fee be used solely for cutting or otherwise removing overshadowing tree growth to produce underbrush sprouts and saplings for deer food and cover on game lands. Antlerless deer licenses sold during the 1991-92 fiscal year, as reported by the Game Commission, totaled 838,462. This mandated that a minimum of \$1,676,924 be expended for the above mentioned purposes. The agency actually expended \$2,075,483 and committed \$20,458 during the fiscal year for these purposes, for an excess of \$419,017 over the requirement.

GAME FUND EXPENDITURES AND COMMITMENTS
\$48,494,202
FOR FISCAL YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 1992



GAME COMMISSION REVENUE
\$50,458,518
FOR FISCAL YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 1992





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Game Fund Balance Sheet

ASSETS

Cash with treasurer	\$183
Cash in transit	10,159
Cash advancement accounts	290,700
Temporary investments	50,369,000
Accrued interest receivable	297,364
Grants receivable — federal gov't.	2,905,107
Fixed assets	74,678,478
Total assets	\$128,550,991

LIABILITIES

Vouchers payable	\$234,648
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	3,367,811
Due to other commonwealth funds	671,665
Due to other governments	130,351
Total liabilities	\$4,404,475

FUND EQUITY

Reserved from current encumbrances	\$1,418,546
Reserve for restricted revenue	234,654
Fund balance unreserved/undesignated	47,814,838
Investment in fixed assets	74,678,478
Total fund equity	\$124,146,516
Total liabilities & fund equity	\$128,550,991

Game Fund

Statement of unreserved fund balance for fiscal year ended June 30, 1992

Fund balance — unreserved, undesignated, 6/30/91	\$45,997,483
Add: Actual cash receipts: 7/1/91 – 6/30/92	\$50,458,518
Revenue earned as of 6/30/91 and deposited in 1991-92	(4,302,563)
Revenue earned but not received as of June 30, 1992	
Miscellaneous revenue	10,159
Interest on short-term investments	483,482
Due from federal gov't. (grants)	2,905,107
Total revenue accrued but not received as of 6/30/92	3,398,748
Total revenue earned during 91-92	49,554,703
Lapses from prior year appropriations	960,492
Unreserved/undesignated fund balance before commitments and expenditures	96,512,678
Deduct: Current year expenditures and commitments posted from 7/1/91 through 6/30/92	48,494,202
Expenditure accruals as of 6/30/92	4,180,672
Commitments liquidated against 6/30/92 expenditure accruals	(3,988,760)
Total expenditures and commitments before fiscal year 1990-91 accrual reversal	48,686,114
Reversal of commitment and expenditure accrual for 1990-91	11,726
Fund balance — unreserved/undesignated, 6/30/92	\$47,814,838

Schedule of actual revenue deposited in Game Fund, fiscal year ended June 30, 1992



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LICENSES AND FEES	
Resident hunting — adult	\$11,061,175
Resident hunting — junior	511,486
Resident hunting — senior	634,025
Resident lifetime hunting	137,314
Nonresident hunting — adult	5,777,337
Nonresident hunting — junior	98,592
Resident bear	935,558
Nonresident bear	58,733
Antlerless deer	4,159,480
Archery	1,463,337
Muzzleloader	524,508
Landowner hunting	17,570
Nonresident 7-day hunting	65,262
Resident furtaker — adult	197,064
Resident furtaker — junior	10,056
Resident furtaker — senior	12,717
Resident lifetime furtaker	2,838
Nonresident furtaker — adult	11,532
Nonresident furtaker — junior	60
Issuing agents' application fee	31,749
Special game permits	216,612
Rights-of-way	318,998
Total licenses & fees	\$26,246,003
FINES AND PENALTIES	
Game Law fines	\$1,684,606
MISCELLANEOUS REVENUE	
Interest on securities & deposits	\$4,332,453
Sale of timber & other wood products	7,902,975
Sale of coal	515,508
Ground rentals & royalties from oil and gas lease	414,342
Sale of Game News	701,074
Wildlife promotional publications & materials	349,515
Nongame fund	144,798
Stamp sales & art print royalties, waterfowl management	96,052
Sale of skins & guns	49,788
Other (Game lands map sales, sale of grain and hay, SPORT promotional publications, prior year expenditure refunds)	223,086
Total miscellaneous revenue	\$14,729,591
Total nontax revenue	\$42,660,200
AUGMENTATIONS	
Federal aid	\$7,545,775
Sale of vehicles	52,800
PA Conservation Corps	28,501
Donations	106,655
Endangered species	42,354
Hunter-Trapper Ed Camp program	13,990
Youth shooting sports program	8,243
Total augmentations	\$7,798,318
Grand total all revenue in Game Fund	<u>\$50,458,518</u>



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Expenditures and commitments: current executive authorization for fiscal year ended June 30, 1992

Salaries & wages	\$22,519,512
State share employee benefits	9,155,776
Land purchases and acquisition costs	2,373,998
Printing & advertising	1,700,534
Automotive repairs, supplies & rentals	1,125,215
Payments to local municipalities	
in-lieu-of-taxes	806,865
Maintenance & improvements	
of building, grounds and machinery	1,380,180
Payments to other state agencies	
Comptroller services rendered	478,100
Auditing services	124,857
Civil service & personnel services	62,639
Purchasing services	63,006
Checkwriting & disbursement services	18,596
Pheasant feed	474,741
Wildlife habitat seedlings and plantings	117,815
Motor vehicle purchases	1,856,905
Travel & special conference expenses	945,247
Radio & communications equipment purchases	
and contracted maintenance service	388,473
Telephone expenses	487,528
Postage	605,503
Heating, power & light	542,528
Legal, appraisal & consulting fees	714,219
Other supplies & services	340,136
Uniforms	179,702
Office equipment, maintenance,	
rentals & supplies	253,242
Equipment & machinery purchases	728,539
Electronic data processing contractual services,	
rentals and purchases	482,368
Educational supplies, literature & classroom	
training equipment	278,763
Insurance: auto, liability, fidelity	203,657
Clinical services, laboratory & medical supplies	18,892
Payments for bear damage claims	9,437
Deer fencing	57,229
Total	<u>\$48,494,202</u>

Game Fund expenditures and commitments by program area, July 1, 1991, through June 30, 1992

Executive office	\$731,267
Non-distributable comptroller costs	478,100
Assisting other agencies	31,140
Public Works program	21,738
General administration	3,203,687
Personnel costs	3,531,517
Warehousing	94,422
Agency purchasing	226,887
Auto acquisition, maintenance, credit card cost	217,491
Office maintenance & services	391,660
Training costs	1,258,553
Licensing program	975,727



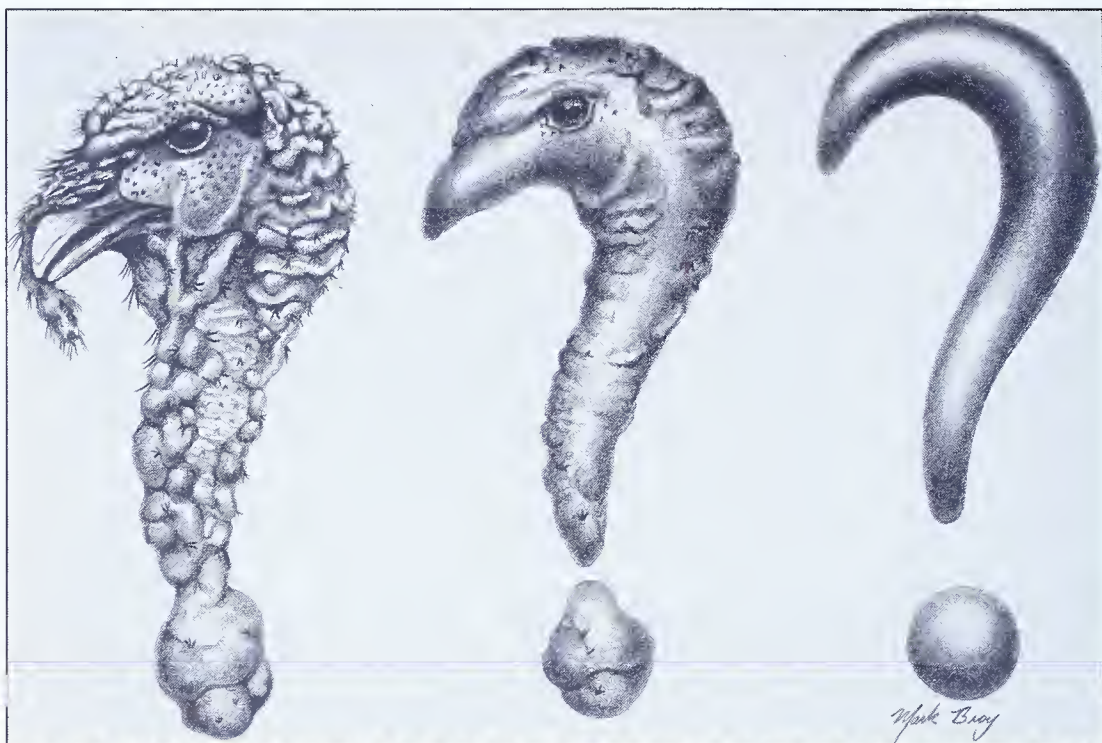
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800 telephone service	75,316
Information & Education	
administration and planning	194,649
Public services	1,589,998
Publications	1,369,365
Hunter-Trapper Education program	433,550
Audio-visual program	435,205
Wildlife research program administration	395,915
Game Farm operations	3,252,272
Wildlife research support services	71,659
Forest wildlife research program	640,661
Farmland wildlife research program	119,134
Game bird/waterfowl research program	288,149
Furbearer research program	143,599
Endangered, threatened & nongame wildlife management	217,372
Law enforcement program	
management & planning	1,330,951
General law enforcement	6,736,692
Animal damage complaints	668,213
Special permits	37,342
In-service training, law enforcement	521,628
Assisting other agencies' law enforcement	16,639
Radio system	514,752
General equipment maintenance	118,099
Damage to wildlife	9,065
Endangered species/nongame law enforcement	16,846
Information systems	933,102
Land management administration	4,177,994
Environmental review program	255,355
Land acquisition	4,150,541
Howard Nursery management	322,748
Herbaceous openings	767,350
Public access programs	1,322,569
Forest management	2,284,195
Food-producing improvements	395,902
Game lands construction & maintenance	3,306,534
Shooting range construction & maintenance	218,652
Total	<u>\$48,494,202</u>

Pennsylvania Game Commission schedule of fixed assets, June 30, 1992

Land & land improvements	\$61,821,939
Buildings & building improvements	10,006,292
Machinery & equipment*	2,850,247
Total	<u>\$74,678,478</u>

*The commonwealth's fixed asset accounting system threshold for reporting this category of assets increased from \$15,000 to \$20,000 and became effective on July 1, 1991. This accounting change produced a significant reduction in the number of reportable assets.



HAVING JUST killed a turkey, a hunter takes a moment to reflect on the young bird's life and rediscovers some of the wonders of nature.

Backtracking the Turkey

David R. Titus

I'LL NEVER FORGET. It was a beautiful, clear crisp day in northern Pennsylvania and I had just shot my first turkey. I couldn't ask for anything more. But then, on my way from the woods, I caught movement in the hardwood timber ahead. I stopped and seconds later three turkeys, glistening against the background of snow, crossed a small opening.

Only a quarter-mile from where I had shot my bird a short time earlier, I thought back to the killing of my prize. I had come upon an area where evidence in the light snow indicated turkeys had been feeding on fat beechnuts the previous day. Positioning myself between two cabin-size boulders, I made a call and within seconds I had a response.

A gobbler, one setting up quite a clamor,

came into view — just out of range. He just as quickly disappeared, but immediately after I repeated my call he appeared again, this time well within range. I shot and killed it. All the action took no more than five minutes.

Seeing the other birds as I carried out my prize caused me to start wondering. Had my trophy been a member of this small flock? Where had this young gobbler roosted the previous night? Did he roost alone? Was he a member of *any* flock?

I suddenly wished it was possible to know more about this bird I had killed with so little effort. What of his parents? Was he fathered by an old patriarch of the forest who had sired many young during previous mating seasons, or had this been his first year of maturity?

I tried to imagine the strutting area where the proud gobbler had displayed his dazzling, iridescent plumage to the mother of my prize. Perhaps it was a small forest glade with nearby laurel or hemlock to provide escape cover if danger threatened. Or possibly his area was near the brow of a steep ridge where a few long strides would put him over the crest and out of sight.

How Many?

How many hens were in the harem — two, three, possibly more? How many times did he have to defend his harem from other gobblers responding to their natural desires, intent on fulfilling their part in the scheme of nature?

What happened after the mating season and the hens had scattered to take up the important responsibility of incubating their clutches? Did the harem-master later succumb to the calls of a turkey hunter during the spring gobbler season, or was he still alive to gather another harem in the springtime of another year?

And what of the hen? Was she young or several years of age? Was my prize a member of her first brood, or had there been others in previous years? After the mating, where did the bright-eyed queen of the forest select her nest site? Was it under a scraggly mountain laurel bush, next to an ancient tree stump, or concealed in the midst of a smaller scatter of fallen tree limbs? I had, through the years, found wild turkey nests in such places.

Thoughts of the nest brought other questions. How many eggs were in the clutch, eight, nine, or possibly 14 or 15? Did my bird hatch from the first egg laid, or the third, or maybe the last?

Did all the eggs hatch, or did one or two remain as a reminder of the small miracle that had taken place at this site, so carefully selected, so faithfully tended for 28 days and nights? What hazards did she have to contend with during this long vigil?

How many times was she pelted by driving spring rains? How many raccoons, foxes, skunks and opossums had passed within close proximity? How many sharp-eyed crows, which dearly love eggs, had

failed to spot the nest as they passed overhead or perched in nearby trees while the hen was off securing food and water?

The crafty hen had outsmarted the sly crows by making sure that each time she left there was a scattering of dead leaves over the buff colored eggs to provide perfect camouflage. Sometimes the hen would even pick up dead leaves and place them on her own back to camouflage herself while sitting on the nest.

Certainly the hazards multiplied after the eggs hatched, when the hen had more than a nest to protect. At that point she had a family of scurrying, demanding poults to guard against hawks, owls and others on the list of dangers.

The young birds forever darting in search of food would certainly be more difficult to protect than the nest of immobile eggs. I knew the hen quickly taught her brood to freeze at her danger signal and remain motionless until she gave the "all clear" call.

In spite of her many wiles, I have to



"We Need Wildlife" is a message more people need to realize and appreciate if the future of our wildlife resources is to be ensured. To help promote that theme, the Game Commission has produced a new patch featuring a cardinal resting on a dogwood sprig. The 3-inch full color patch costs \$3 each, delivered, and may be ordered from the Pennsylvania Game Commission, Dept. MS, 2001 Elmerton Ave., Harrisburg, PA 17110-9797.

wonder how many of the brood had fallen to predators. I also know that cold, spring rains and cool days without sunshine, can prove fatal to young turkeys during their first days of life.

What range had the hen selected to raise her brood? How large an area did it encompass? In what forest clearings and old fields did she find the insects so vital in the diet of her young? Where did she find suitable dusting sites and areas in which to rest, sun, preen? How many times, if any, was her maturing brood sighted by human beings?

I bagged my trophy on the 23rd day of the season. How many members of my turkey's family had been killed by hunters? Had my prize been shot at but *missed* by others? How many times, if any, had he failed to respond when he heard the enticing calls of a turkey hunter?

Yes, many thoughts and unanswered questions passed through my mind as I gazed at this creature of the wild. Reflecting on all that had gone into the development of this turkey, from the moment of fertilization to the moment it fell to my

gun, my feelings about the animal I had killed took on a new perspective.

I realized most hunters, myself included, fail to give thought to all that goes into the making of a trophy buck, a magnificent turkey, a beautiful wood duck drake, a colorful cockbird, or any other wildlife trophy.

We are prone, when sitting down with friends and family to a table centered with the fruits of our hunt, to boast about our abilities. When giving a venison roast or steak to friends, we are apt to mention the well-placed shot at 200 yards.

Yes, we take pride in the quick reflexes and perfect shot that dropped the thundering grouse bursting from a thornapple thicket or the twittering woodcock spiraling away from a tangle of alders.

We must admit, however, that our efforts and abilities are puny and insignificant when compared to all that goes into the development of the trophies we so casually accept. Some call these trophies the miracles and wonders of nature; others call them the handiwork of God. Is there a difference? I don't think so.

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First Gun

By William Johnson

AS A BOY grows to manhood, many important "firsts" mark the passage. The first kiss from a girl, the first shave, the first "car date," and so on. If the boy is a hunter, then it is likely that no first is as well remembered or makes him feel more grown up as his first gun.

I got my first gun when I was 12 years old. I had been saving for two years, and my gun fund had just received an influx of birthday and Christmas money. With \$35 burning a hole in my pocket, I had been bugging my dad for more than a month to take me to look for a shotgun. Finally, on a Saturday in February, the big day arrived.

We went to nearby Braddock, and like many people in those days who didn't have a lot of money, we didn't go to a gunshop,

but to a pawnshop or "hock shop" instead.

My dad was real open-minded about the whole affair. I could buy any shotgun I wanted, as long as it was a Winchester Model 97 with a flawless barrel and a stock that had good grain. My dad hunted with a 97, his dad hunted with a 97, and his brother hunted with a 97. Although when it comes to rifles and handguns he will consider various makes and models, the barrel and the wood are still the two main criteria he uses when judging any gun.

The first two shops we entered had some interesting shotguns but no 97s. As we entered the third shop, I began wondering how I could tell Dad, without being blasphemous, that I could be happy with something other than a 97. Fortunately,

that wasn't necessary. When we told the shopkeeper what we were looking for, he smiled and said, "I think I have just what you want." Did he ever. From the back room he brought out a Model 97 in 16-gauge.

Smaller than a 12-gauge and with a 24-inch barrel, it was a perfect choice for a kid's first gun, and the walnut stock is still the nicest piece of wood I've ever seen on a shotgun. I knew only one test still needed to be met — the barrel. I swallowed hard as Dad broke down the gun and held the barrel up to the light. He had his "horse trading" face on and his expression never changed as he handed me the barrel. When I looked down the barrel I couldn't suppress a huge grin — it was perfect.

When Dad asked the price the shopkeeper said \$50. My grin quickly faded and my heart stopped beating. Dad hadn't reacted at all to the price, he just looked the gun over a little longer and then began dicker- ing.

Early in the negotiations I was pointing out all the gun's good points, but after Dad gave me a sideways glance I realized that that probably wasn't the thing to do. I don't really remember much about the rest of the negotiations. I just stood there quietly staring at the shotgun resting on the counter between the two "combatants." Occasionally I would reach in and gently run my fingers over the receiver and stock.

I do remember the shopkeeper finally saying that \$40 was the best he could do. Before I was enveloped in total panic, Dad said okay, pulled out his wallet and opened the secret flap behind the billfold. That's where he kept a secret stash of cash for hunting and fishing trips.

Although Mom suspected the existence of this fund, Dad never admitted to it. I guess he thought Mom would just spend the money frivolously on such things as groceries or the electric bill. When Dad handed me the \$5, I was definitely the happiest boy in town.

I had been handling and shooting guns for six years under Dad's tutelage, so I didn't get a safety lecture or anything like that on the way home. All I remember is Dad saying to tell Mom that the gun cost

\$35. He obviously didn't want to explain where the extra \$5 had come from.

My father seemed to know a lot of things instinctively, and shooting was one of them. When he was in his prime he rarely missed. He never practiced, either. I think he believed it was a waste of ammunition. I think he expected me also to be a natural at shooting. I had done a lot of shooting, but mostly with a 22.

When I asked him about shooting a shotgun at moving targets, he just said "lead 'em." Armed with that wealth of information I entered my first fall hunting season.

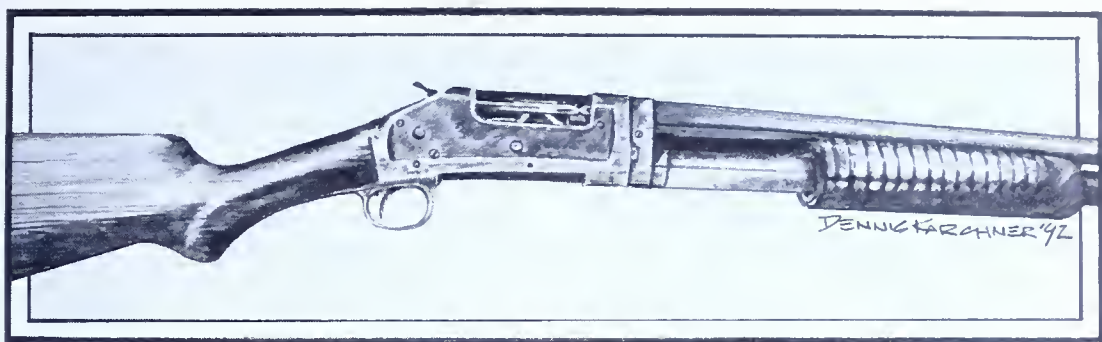
One of the things the first season proved was that I wasn't a natural shot. I bagged some squirrels, but I couldn't hit rabbits. Rabbits were our main quarry and they were what I wanted most. It wasn't for lack of effort or an ammunition conservation ethic on my part that kept me from connecting with those brown blurs.

Almost every rabbit that came by got the full quota of three shells discharged in his general direction. There were other things going on at the time to worry about: the threat of nuclear war, the Cuban Missile Crisis and junior high dances. But none of those equaled the importance of getting that first rabbit.

Regular season ended and all I had to show for my rabbit hunting efforts was a collection of empty shotgun shells. When extended season came in after Christmas, we were going to have only one opportunity to go hunting. Dad and I were going to hunt at his cousin's place near Breezewood.

The Friday we were supposed to leave it snowed all day, and it was still snowing that night as we finished packing. My mother didn't want us to go because the roads were bad and we would have to cross the mountains on Route 30. She had never been able to talk my dad out of a hunting trip before, though, and I was darn glad that this wasn't going to be her first.

The ride was memorable. The snow was deep and most of the time we were the only vehicle on the road. It was like traveling in a winter wonderland. We arrived at the farm late. While I waited for the bed in the unheated bedroom to warm up enough to



MOST SPORTSMEN have a “first gun,” a firearm that holds special memories. Typically, we keep them — regardless how large and up-to-date our collections become. Some continue to hunt with them, others put them up in hopes of passing them on.

go to sleep, my head was filled with thoughts of the next day's hunt.

After the snow stopped that night, the mercury took a nosedive. The morning was bright but frigid. More than a foot of snow blanketed the ground, and it was crusted on top. We didn't see a thing the first hour.

My concentration was beginning to slip when our beagle Dixie entered a patch of pines down the slope to my left. A rabbit came streaking out of the pines running almost dead away from me. Like many previous times, the 97 was up in an instant and a load of No. 5s was on the way. This time was different, though. At the crack of the gun a perfect head shot sent the cottontail cartwheeling across the snow. The first rabbit was finally in the bag and the flood gates were about to open.

As the years passed, the 97 and I became an extremely efficient rabbit harvesting machine. When it boomed, rabbits rolled. The magic age of 16 brought with it new opportunities and new freedoms. I could hunt with my friends and — best of all — I could hunt by myself.

Hunting alone, with just the beagles, is what I enjoyed the most. I had never felt so free or so grown up. I felt like a pioneer, totally in control of my destiny. For me it was the confirmation that I had reached manhood. Every boy needs that feeling and some seek it in fast cars or drugs. Fortunately for me, hunting fulfilled that need.

After college I moved to York County where rabbits weren't as plentiful, but there seemed to be a pheasant behind

every cornstalk. I soon found out that I couldn't hit pheasants with the same frequency that I did rabbits. I blamed it on the little 16. I felt it was time I moved up to a 12-gauge. A procession of 12s followed, but I soon came to realize it wasn't the 97's fault.

For a while I would still use the 97 to hunt rabbits in the extended season. But I developed an allergy to rabbit blood, and that put an end to my late season forays with the 97.

When I started on the procession of 12-gauges, I never did sell the 97. Originally, my reason for hanging on to it was that it was a good kid's gun, and if I ever had a son it would be good for him.

I have a son now and in about six years he will be looking for his first shotgun. It will not be the 97, though. He'll have it some day, just as I now have my father's first gun. However, I want his first gun to be his own, so when he gets older the memories attached to it will be only his.

Now that I am older I understand how strong such memories can be. When I handle my 97 it still feels more natural in my hands than any gun I have ever owned. I like to hear the sound of the action when I work it. If my life depended on me hitting a rabbit there is no doubt which gun I would want.

The 97 helped me bridge the gap from youth to manhood. More importantly these days, however, is that it helps me bridge the ever-widening gap between who I am now and the boy who when he was afield with that gun and his beagles thought life was perfect.



FIELD NOTES



Little People

MERCER COUNTY — My wife and I took our five-year-old daughter, Katy, and her nearly five-year-old cousin on an afternoon walk at Greenville Riverside Park. The kids enjoyed the walk and they looked for critters all day, but all we saw were a few chipmunks. Later that night, my dad called and asked Katy about her walk. She excitedly told him about all the “munchkins” she saw. Maybe something was lost in the translation, but then again, her ground-level perspective might’ve allowed her to see something we couldn’t. —WCO Donald G. Chaybin, Greenville.



They Ain't Afraid

BRADFORD COUNTY — Some Terry Township residents had the pleasure of watching 16 turkeys wander into a residential area. The birds walked into a yard where two plastic ghosts had been set up for Halloween. Two large gobblers stalked around the ghosts for a good half-hour, closely eyeing the plastic figures — much to the delight of observers. The flock finally left, the gobblers giving the ghosts one last glance. —WCO Edward N. Gallew, Wyalusing.

Flagrant Violation

WARREN COUNTY — Last fall my deputies and I checked several turkey hunters who were not wearing fluorescent orange. As we talked to them, they pulled orange hats and vests from their pockets and backpacks. This intentional, flagrant violation resulted in citations for those hunters. We're serious about hunter safety and some people are going to have to pay the price to find that out. —WCO James W. Egley, Irvine.

Innovation?

WAYNE COUNTY — While cruising SGL 159, I saw a hen pheasant being stalked by a housecat. I watched as the hen crossed the road a couple times, and each time the cat was several yards closer. When it looked like the cat was about to close in for the kill, I beeped my horn and slammed the car door — sending the pheasant in one direction and the cat in another. There are many tools in wildlife conservation; maybe I've found two more. —WCO Frank J. Dooley, Moscow.

Great Group

I've had the privilege of working with Waterfowl USA's Lawrence County chapter, and I have to say they are an outstanding group. Working in conjunction with LMO Ned Weston, the organization has raised funds to help acquire Celery Swamp as an addition to SGL 151; they've shared costs on maintaining and constructing water control devices; and members have donated their time to help plant wetlands and put up nesting devices. I'm sure they've done more than what I've mentioned, but I wanted to let them know how much their contributions are appreciated. —Land Management Supervisor Keith E. Harbaugh, Meadville.

Work for Winter Food

MONROE COUNTY — Many well-meaning people put out food for deer in the winter months. This practice, however, concentrates the deer and makes them dependent on that food source. They also may lose their fear of humans, and if the food is removed the animals could become dangerous. Instead of putting out corn or other food, get together with some friends and cut browse or plant wildlife food crops this spring to produce long-term benefits. — WCO Thomas M. Smith, Bartonsville.

Thanks, Mom

We've all seen athletes push and shove their way in front of television cameras to shout "Hi, Mom." I've realized my life's ambition as a WCO, and my mother and I have shared the sights and sounds of nesting bald eagles, bears and their cubs, great blue herons, countless flights of Canada geese at Pymatuning, and much more. So rather than say hello, I'd like to say thanks to my mom, Ruth Ray of Latrobe. — LMO Barry K. Ray, Sr., Rockwood.

String of Luck

SUSQUEHANNA COUNTY — Deputy Russ Newhart heard about a bowhunter who was using a string tracker. A buck appeared, but he shot over the deer and the string rested on its back. As the deer tried to get free of the string, it made a circle back toward the hunter, who then made a good shot and downed the buck. — WCO Charles J. Arcovitch, Kingsley.

Some Role Model

SOMERSET COUNTY — A hunter-ed instructor told me about a young student who constantly disrupted the class. When told she wouldn't pass if she didn't pay attention, the student said she didn't care. When he asked why she was even taking the class, she replied, "My father is making me take it so he can get me a license and use my deer tag." — WCO Clifford E. Guindon, Jr., Boswell.



Blast and Cast

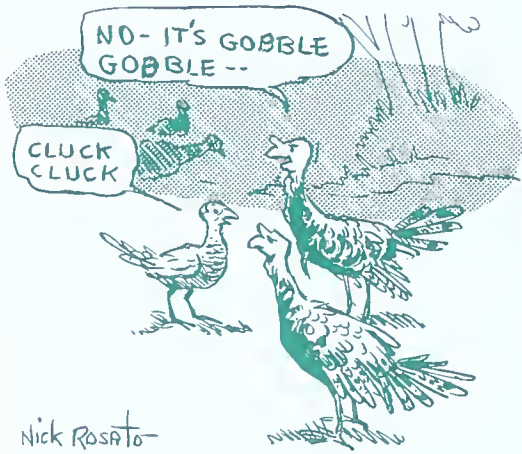
WESTMORELAND COUNTY — Rodney Zampogna of Greensburg was hunting on the first day of the early resident goose season last September. He'd planned well, but the first goose he killed splashed down in the middle of a pond. The farmer didn't have a boat, but he did have an old casting rod and a surface plug. Rodney missed the goose with his first three casts, but he did catch three small-mouth bass. On his fourth cast he snagged the goose and brought it to shore, only to find a large snapping turtle clamped onto the bird's head. I admire Rodney's perserverance in retrieving the goose, and I'd like to know where this bass hotspot is. — WCO Joseph V. Stefko, Jr., Greensburg.

Popeye He's Not

COLUMBIA COUNTY — We'd coordinated our plans for patrolling the opening day of waterfowl season. WCO George Wilcox and I were assigned foot patrol, while a neighboring officer had completed a detailed plan for marine patrol. Unfortunately, he forgot to install the boat's plug before he launched. The boat immediately flooded and he had to return to shore. Next, a gas line broke and he had to come ashore once more to fix it. Then, finally out on the water, he hit a rock and damaged the propeller. Who said foot patrol was so bad, Pete? — WCO Steve A. Smithonic, Catawissa.

Swimming the Channel

LUZERNE COUNTY — Deputy Steve Dunham was boating the Chesapeake Bay with his father-in-law when he saw something bobbing in the water in front of them. They stopped just in time to avoid hitting a fawn that had swum a half-mile from shore. Steve's father-in-law used the boat to herd the young deer to a nearby island. — WCO Donald R. Burchell, Dallas.



Birds of Choice

WYOMING COUNTY — While patrolling Sugar Hollow, Deputy Gene Gaydos saw a flock of turkeys in a distant field. That's not unusual here because we have a good turkey population, but Gene noticed one of the birds looked small. Glassing the flock, he saw that it included a hen pheasant. I've heard of soaring with the eagles, and I guess in a pheasant's case turkeys would be a preferred choice. — WCO William Wasserman, Tunkhannock.

A Tribute

My Food & Cover crews and some DER personnel built a new shooting range on a reclaimed strip mine on Archbald Mountain. I was pleased to see many people using it last fall. The range is a tribute to the cooperation that exists between the state's environmental agencies, and to the accomplishments that have been made in reclaiming mines. — LMO John C. Shutkufski, Damascus.

Construction Kills Habitat

FULTON COUNTY — Last year, while shooting at the NRA National Police Shooting Championships in Jackson, MS, I had the chance to talk to many fellow conservation officers from around the country. The same problems seem to be everywhere, and we agreed the major threat to wildlife is habitat loss from needless construction and unwarranted expansion. Do we really need a new shopping mall? Think about it. — WCO Mark Crowder, McConnellsburg.

Blinded

TIOGA COUNTY — Late night patrols can be very tiring, and deputies have been known to doze off (that never happens to salaried officers, of course). I know of two deputies who were embarrassed when a late spotlihter cast a beam into the cab of their patrol vehicle. They were even more embarrassed when they didn't catch the guy. Isn't that right, Packy and Spud? — WCO Steve Gehringer, Mansfield.

Could've Sworn It Was

LYCOMING COUNTY — Food & Cover employee Philip Landon and I sat quietly along the road, watching cars pass uncaringly by while 100 or so crated ring-necks in the back shuffled in their cages. After what seemed like hours, Phil finally said, "Guess we better call someone." "Yes," I said. "Are you sure the tank was full when you left this morning?" — WCO Terry D. Wills, Williamsport.

Recreate for Wildlife

CHESTER COUNTY — Instead of sitting in front of the television this winter, go outside and enjoy the season. If we get enough snow, try cross-country skiing or snowshoeing. If there's no snow, take day hikes or set up a winter camp. Also, you can help wildlife by cutting browse, building brushpiles, and erecting nest boxes and bird feeders. — WCO Steve Bernardi, Atglen.



Don't Feed the Bears

BLAIR COUNTY — Last year I handled a lot of nuisance bear complaints. Although I enjoy working with this magnificent animal, it does cut into time I could devote to more productive activities. The complaints I handled were too often caused by people feeding bears. Feeding bears can tame them to the point they lose their fear of people. Once they're taught that humans are sources of hand-outs, the animals begin seeking food around human habitation — which leads to problems. — WCO Steve Kleiner, Altoona.

Hat's Off

POTTER COUNTY — I'd like to commend the commonwealth's sportsmen for their compliance with the new fluorescent orange regulations. Although it was a most controversial issue, each of the 50 or so hunters I checked on the opening day of turkey season wore at least 250 square inches of the safety color. Although I heard a lot of complaints before the season, our hunters proved once again to be law-abiding citizens. — WCO William C. Ragosta, Coudersport.

Didn't He Scout?

CLEARFIELD COUNTY — Deputy Tom Newell was turkey hunting opening day in the hollow below his house. Meanwhile, his wife, Dana, was enjoying the antics of four turkeys in their front yard. — WCO Colleen M. Shannon, Luthersburg.

Not Uncle Walt

LYCOMING COUNTY — A fisherman witnessed something that occurs often in nature but few humans get to see. He watched a mink swim across a stream and enter weeds on the opposite shore. Soon it swam back to the near shoreline, carrying a young merganser in its mouth. The mink made six trips in all, each time returning with a duckling. This is how nature works, which surprises those who think Walt Disney accurately depicts the natural world. — WCO Dan Marks, Montoursville.

Someone's Got To Do It

ADAMS COUNTY — Each year I present a program to sixth-graders at Camp Nawaka, where I explain the duties of a WCO. It always includes the endless job of picking up roadkills. One youngster didn't think much of that part of the job. His "thank you" note read: "Thank you for coming to camp. It must be a gross job going around getting dead animals off the road. I wouldn't like that job. I would throw up all over the place." Maybe my job isn't as glamorous as I thought. — WCO Larry Haynes, Gettysburg.



A Real Antique

BRADFORD COUNTY — You know you're getting old when you walk into an antique shop and see a *Game News* for sale that has your training school graduation picture in it. — WCO William A. Bower, Troy.

Just the Ticket

CRAWFORD COUNTY — Most of the hunting seasons are past now, but before you put those rifles and shotguns into storage, remember that crow season runs until April 4. In addition to extending your time in the field, it's a great way to teach a youngster safe hunting practices. I'm sure that many farmers will welcome you onto their properties in areas where crows cause crop damage. — WCO Mark A. Allegro, Meadville.

Way To Go

VENANGO COUNTY — I can't help blowing the horn for my nephew, WCO Dan Yahner in Chester County. He recently busted up a poaching ring that was selling venison, and he linked one of the poachers to more than 20 unsolved deer killings in the past year. — WCO Leo C. Yahner.



Math Whiz

PERRY COUNTY — At a hunter-ed class at the Duncannon Sportsmen's Club, I was explaining that six people may hunt together for small game and 25 people may hunt together for big game. I then asked if anyone could tell me the difference between big and small game. One young man immediately responded, "Nineteen." It wasn't exactly the answer I was looking for, but it was prompt and correct. — WCO Leroy Everett, Newport.

Image Leaders

LUZERNE COUNTY — I spent a lot of time patrolling the Susquehanna River and other large bodies of water during the first part of waterfowl season. I came across very few violations. All the hunters I checked were using steel shot, and they were staying out of Safety Zones and were conforming to legal shooting hours. Waterfowlers have a good image going, and I hope they keep it up. — WCO Edward J. Zindell, Wilkes-Barre.

Go PGC

ELK COUNTY — Being the WCO in a rural district, it doesn't take long for everyone to get to know you and associate you and your family with the agency. That was illustrated at a recent high school football game when my son Matt made a tackle. The enthusiastic announcer declared, "The tackle was made by the Pennsylvania Game Commission." — WCO Dick Bodenhorn, Ridgway.

Return the Favor

PERRY COUNTY — Now that most of the hunting season is behind us, consider doing something for the landowner who allowed you the privilege of hunting on his property. See if there's anything you can do, such as helping to install deer deterrent fencing. The Commission provides the fence and posts to qualified farmers, and I'm sure a farmer would welcome the help putting it up. — WCO James L. Brown, Loysville.

Watchable Elk

FRANKLIN COUNTY — Local sportsman Lester Martin told me about his trip to Elk County, where he and his wife watched two separate bull elk put on courting and rutting displays. Lester has hunted elk out West but had never enjoyed the sight of the elk at such close range, nor the courtship display. He sure had a lot of good things to say about "our" elk herd and the Commission's management program. — WCO Frank Clark, Fayetteville.



Bob Haines

JERRY ZEIDLER, Northcentral Region Information & Education supervisor, checks a 364-pound Clinton County bear shot by Gary Rantz of Stowe (standing, center). Keystone bear hunters shot 1,584 bruins, the fourth highest kill on record. That harvest figure is about what the agency had hoped for because it will keep the population at its current level.

1992 bear harvest is fourth highest

HUNTERS TOOK 1,584 black bears during the three-day season, according to preliminary figures released at press time.

Agency biologists hoped for a harvest between 1,500 and 1,600 bears to maintain the population at its present level. Over the past six years, hunters have taken an average of 1,642 bears each season.

Lycoming County topped the list again this year with 140 animals. Potter County's harvest increased 50 percent over last year; hunters there took 121 bears. Rounding out the top five were Clinton, 118; McKean, 97; and Clearfield, 93.

The Northcentral Region again led the state with 838 bruins. Following was the Northeast, 400; Northwest, 151; Southwest, 94; Southcentral, 86; and Southeast, 15.

One of the big stories this year was an 800-pounder taken by Keith A. Boyer of

Fleetwood. He killed the bear in Carbon County on opening day. Commission Biologist Gary Alt estimated the live weight at 827 pounds, probably the heaviest ever shot in the state.

This year's statewide harvest ranks fourth behind the 2,213 taken in 1989, 1,687 in 1991, and 1,614 in 1988. Bear were killed in 42 of the state's 67 counties.



Sopchick paints WTFW winner

Frequent *Game News* contributor Bob Sopchick's rendering of a black bear was chosen as this year's Working Together For Wildlife featured art print. Sopchick's painting, which graces this month's cover, was selected from among 49 entries by Pennsylvania artists.

Sopchick, who's been teaching art at the college level for 16 years, is the only repeat winner in the WTFW contest; his previous entries got the nod in 1986 ("Country Lane Kestrel") and '87 ("Autumn Challenge"). Sopchick also won last year's state duck stamp contest with his Canada goose painting.

Sopchick is an avid sportsman, and an ardent conservationist and environmentalist. He donates time and art to groups such as Audubon Society, Ducks Unlimited, National Wild Turkey Federation, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, Ruffed Grouse Society and the Susquehanna Waterfowlers Association.

The Working Together for Wildlife program, in which art prints and patches are sold, is designed to raise money for nongame programs and research. To date, more than \$1 mil-

lion of WTFW money has been used, for example, to reintroduce bald eagles, ospreys and otters to their historic ranges in the state.

The success of the program was highlighted in 1985 when ospreys successfully nested in the state for the first time in decades. Then, in 1987, the first bald eagle nest outside Crawford County was documented.

The otter reintroduction project is proceeding according to plan, and the aquatic animals have begun to establish themselves in several drainages across the state.

Aside from these highly visible accomplishments, WTFW monies are also being used to monitor and survey many other nongame birds and mammals.

"Working Together For Wildlife is an ambitious and vital program that not only funds our nongame projects but educates both the sporting and general publics on the importance of all wildlife," said Carl Graybill, assistant director of the Bureau of Information & Education.

"The art is attractive and has great collector value; both wildlife and people benefit from WTFW sales."

Hershey site of January elk foundation rendezvous

The Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation is holding an elk rendezvous at the Hershey Lodge & Convention Center Jan. 15-17.

The public is invited to tour the exhibit hall, which is open on Friday and Saturday 10 a.m. to 7 p.m., and Sunday 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. A wildlife theater, which runs concurrently with exhibit hall hours, will feature elk videos.

Admission is free for RMEF members. The cost to the general public is \$5; children under 12 get in free.

RMEF is a non-profit organization dedicated to raising funds for on-the-ground projects aimed at benefiting

elk, other wildlife and their habitat. In eight years, the group — along with federal, state and private partners — has put \$25 million into projects affecting more than 1 million acres in 22 states.

More than 2,000 Pennsylvanians are RMEF members. The state is host to an elk herd that numbers close to 200 animals. RMEF was instrumental in helping the Commission acquire SGL 311 in Elk County. In addition, the organization provided the agency with \$50,000 to help maintain elk habitat, and it has pledged another \$42,000 to further enhance habitat throughout our elk range.

Early goose season harvest tops 10,000

More than 8,300 waterfowlers took advantage of the state's first early Canada goose season in September. Nearly 60 percent of those who applied for the required special permit actually hunted. More than 11,400 geese were taken during the 10-day season.

Report cards mailed to the Commission by those participating in the hunt indicate the success rate was about 47 percent, and it was nearly identical in both the Northwest and Southeast regions where the hunt was held.

The regional breakdown shows that a majority of the state's waterfowlers

participating in the special hunt, 6,296, were in the Northwest; a little over 2,000 sportsmen hunted the Southeast. Nearly 8,182 geese were harvested in the Northwest, compared to 3,263 in the Southeast.

The harvest of migrant geese during the special hunt was considered negligible and fell well within U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service guidelines.

"We were very pleased with the success rates and the harvest of the resident geese," said John Dunn, Commission waterfowl biologist. "The success rate was higher than those experienced by other states for a September season."

Last chance for SPORT Essay Contest entries

The Commission's SPORT Essay Contest is open to hunting-age youths across the state. Contestants submit written work relating to safe and ethical hunting behavior.

This year's theme is "What I can do to help improve sportsman/landowner relations."

Essays can be no more than 300 words and must be typed or computer-generated. Awards will be given in two categories, junior (12-15) and senior (16-18).

See the September 1992 *Game News* for complete details. Deadline for the contest is Jan. 31.



THE COMMISSION'S outstanding employees for 1991 were honored at last June's Commission meeting. Receiving the awards were (from left) Elaine K. Hudak, Northeast Region; Linda L. Sheaffer, Harrisburg; Richard T. Haibach, Northeast Region; LMO Keith P. Sanford, Northeast Region; WCO Bernard J. Schmader, Union County; and Paul E. Confer, Northcentral Region. Commission President Edson Crafts and Executive Director Pete Duncan presented the awards.

Game Commission Sale Items

Books & Videos

Game Commission publications cover subjects from firearms and building nesting devices to animal lore and wild game cookery.

Quantity		Price
_____	<i>Shooter's Corner</i> , by Don Lewis	\$15.00
_____	<i>Birds of Pennsylvania</i> , by James & Lillian Wakeley	10.00
_____	<i>Pennsylvania Big Game Records, 1965-1986</i>	10.00
_____	<i>Mammals of Pennsylvania</i> , by J. Kenneth Douthett, et al	4.00
_____	<i>Gone for the Day</i> , by Ned Smith	4.00
_____	<i>Wild Game Cookbook</i>	4.00
_____	<i>Woodlands & Wildlife</i>	4.00
_____	<i>Woodworking for Wildlife</i>	3.00
_____	<i>Ducks at a Distance</i>	1.00
_____	"On the Trail of Pennsylvania's Black Bears" video	29.95

Working Together for Wildlife

Proceeds from Working Together for Wildlife sales support nongame projects and research.

Art Prints — \$125		WTFW Patches — \$3	
_____	1993 "Bear Run" by Bob Sopchick	_____	1993 Black Bear
_____	1992 "Spring Strut" by Taylor Oughton	_____	1991 Red Fox
_____	1991 "At The Den" by Laura Mark-Finberg	_____	1990 Bald Eagle
_____	1990 "Coming Home" by Gerald Putt	_____	1989 White-tailed Deer
_____	1989 "Last Glance" by Jack Paluh	_____	1988 Snowy Egret
_____	1988 "Snowy Egret" by John Pritko	_____	1987 Elk
_____	1987 "Autumn Challenge" by Bob Sopchick	_____	1986 Kestrel
_____	1986 "Country Lane Kestrel" by Bob Sopchick	_____	1985 Bobcat
		_____	1984 Bluebird

Charts & Binders

Our popular bird and mammal charts illustrated by famed wildlife artist Ned Smith.

_____	Set No. 1 (birds — 4 charts) 20" x 30"	\$6
_____	Set No. 2 (birds & mammals — 4 charts) 20" x 30"	6
_____	Set No. 3 (all 8 charts) 11" x 14"	5
_____	GAME NEWS Binders	5

SPORT Items

Show your support for the Sportsmen Policing Our Ranks Together program.

_____	Bronze SPORT Tie-Tack/Lapel Pin	\$3.50
_____	SPORT Patch	1.00
_____	SPORT Hat (one size fits all)	4.00
_____	Turkey Alert Band	3.00

Waterfowl Management Stamps

Voluntary waterfowl management stamps provide vital funding for wetland acquisition and management. Each stamp is available for a three-year period only.

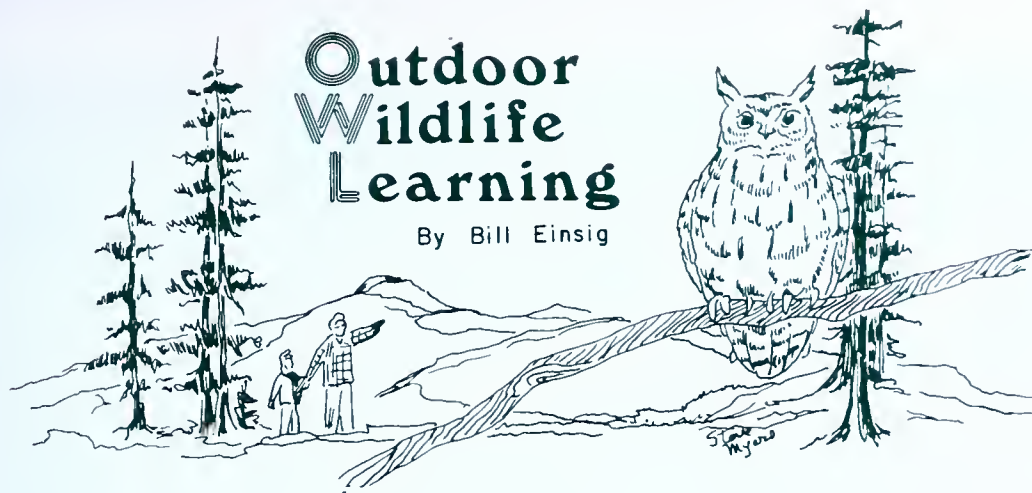
_____	1992 — Canada Goose by Bob Sopchick	\$5.50
_____	1991 — Wigeon by Gerald Putt	5.50

Miscellaneous Patches

Help promote the Commission's wildlife conservation programs with these handsome patches.

_____	"We Need Wildlife" Cardinal	\$3
_____	Pymatuning Wildlife Management Area	2
_____	Middle Creek Wildlife Management Area	2

Mail orders along with remittance (do not send cash) to:
PA Game Commission
Dept. MS
2001 Elmerton Ave.
Harrisburg, PA 17110-9797
Checks should be made payable to Pennsylvania Game Commission. U.S. currency only.



Raccoon Request

Dear Mr. OWL:

We're doing a report on raccoons in our eighth grade class at Pleasant Valley Middle School. I'm interested in obtaining any information you might have pertaining to the raccoon's habitat, breeding, food and other habits in Pennsylvania.

Dear Student:

Raccoons live throughout Pennsylvania woodlands, usually near water. Very adaptable, they are comfortable around suburbs and other human developments where they often raid garbage cans and gardens for food.

In terms of what they eat, raccoons are opportunists. Probably more than half their diet consists of plant material — fruit, nuts, bark, corn and garden vegetables. They also eat crayfish, frogs, eggs of many animals, and a host of small invertebrates such as insects and earthworms. These omnivores raid the nests of other young mammals and birds and are some of the most difficult predators to control around bird nesting boxes.

You'll often hear the bit of folklore that raccoons tend to wash their food before eat-

ing it. This idea probably came from watching captive raccoons dunk food scraps into water before eating them. Many biologists now believe wild raccoons rarely do this, and that these animals make no special effort to wash food before consuming it. After all, most of their food is eaten away from water.

Why, then, would captive animals go through this ritual? Raccoons instinctively feed in water. They have very sensitive tactile senses, so they can literally search for food with their front paws. In captivity, many biologists believe, this instinctive water hunting is frustrated, so captive animals substitute dunking of food or other objects in available water to satisfy the instinctive urge to grope in water.

The raccoon mating season occurs in winter — usually January or February. Males may mate with several females, while each female accepts only one male as a mate. The male sometimes stays with the female for a short time after mating, but generally leaves the female to rear the four to six young on her own. The young mammals are nursed until about eight weeks of age and, when four months old, most raccoon families break up, with each animal heading off to lead a solitary life.

There are seven species of raccoons throughout the New World. Only two have large, widespread populations. Our raccoon

Have a question about the natural world for Mr. OWL to answer? Send them to Mr. OWL, Game News, 2001 Elmerton Ave., Harrisburg, PA 17110-9797.

inhabits most of North America, Mexico and Central America. The crab-eating raccoon lives throughout South America and into Central America, where its range overlaps with our North American species. The remaining five species are isolated on islands near Florida and Mexico.

Confrontations between raccoons, most likely over food or mates, make them highly susceptible to contracting rabies. In fact, the raccoon population in Pennsylvania is the primary reservoir of rabies in the wild community. That fact has led many people to view raccoons as dangerous threats, deserving of an immediate death. Bats, snakes and spiders all hold a similar distinction. They are the “bad guys” of wildlife, which is unfortunate. Raccoons, of course, are protected, and may be killed only in those instances permitted by the Game & Wildlife Code.

Wild animals are not good or bad. We place these values on animals as a reflection of our own feelings toward them based on what we believe to be true at the time. Raccoons infected with rabies should be destroyed, and nuisance coons may need to be trapped or killed to protect crops or domestic fowl. But that does not mean every raccoon should be shot on sight. Seeing a raccoon in the wild is an exciting event. They are not necessarily mean, nasty or bad. They are simply animals with lifestyles that bring them into close occasional contact with people. Sometimes this contact is much too close.

Some years ago, a friend of mine called to ask if I would help remove a raccoon from a neighbor's attic. The woman of the house discovered the masked visitor one evening while she worked at the kitchen sink, when she noticed a small hairy arm reach down through a ceiling vent.

Chasing a raccoon around a stranger's attic, making a fool out of myself, is not one of my favorite pastimes, so I suggested my friend simply place a box trap in the attic and wait. As my luck would have it, someone had thought of that and the raccoon was already secured in the trap. Why did they need me? Well, a caged raccoon can sound pretty vicious and can reach through the cage. In other words, they were apprehensive about picking up the cage and carrying it outside. That I could handle.

It took only a few minutes to cover the cage with an old towel and carry it to my car, ready for a short ride to a nearby field and release. But in that short time, I gained two unforgettable images that give me a chuckle every time I recall them.

Before those folks thought of the box trap, they called the local police. One officer, they told me, thought he could lure the raccoon close enough to lasso it. Now, maybe I'm a bit timid, but I don't think I would want to be holding a rope fastened to a panicked raccoon in a cramped crawl space.

The officer's plan didn't work exactly the way he had intended. The raccoon did come to the food and the officer did throw his lasso. But at the exact moment, the officer's feet slipped off the rafters and plunged through insulation and plaster to the room below — which explained the two holes I saw in the living room ceiling when I first came in the house.

The student who submitted this question was sent a Wildlife Note on raccoons. The Game Commission has nearly 40 Wildlife Notes that cover many wildlife species. Wildlife Notes are available free from the Game Commission, Dept. MS, 2001 Elmerton Ave., Harrisburg, PA 17110-9797.





Fur, Feather and Trout Flies

A FRIEND of mine hunts turkeys, shoots ducks and geese, shotguns for grouse and pheasants, goes after deer and bear, and traps most everything legal on land and in water. But I think he does it all for an ulterior motive. He's just feeding his real passion: fishing.

My friend is a fisherman of a special kind: a fly fishing trout angler. He ties the flies he fishes with, so he must either buy, beg or go out and get his tying materials. Since he's on a middle-class budget, and

all his friends fly fish too, he has to follow the third route, which leaves him no choice but to hunt and trap. What a tough life.

The fur and feathers of wild game are basic stock to any flytier. They arrived by tradition, but remain by utility. Although there are synthetic substitutes available, the "purist" flytier would rather his or her fly tying materials were provided by nature's own tackle shop. This completes a romantic circle, using bits of the furred and feathered wild to catch some of the finny.

Trout flies, for those hunters who don't indulge in the sister sport, are a sort of fishing lure. To produce a fly, materials are wound around or placed on a hook and secured with thread. When finished, the fly should entice trout to bite. As the name suggests, it often looks like something that flies.

Many trout flies imitate stream insects, such as mayflies, stoneflies and caddis flies. Flytiers fashion artificial flies to resemble not just individual types, but various stages in each life cycle. Tiers also concoct their own or use set patterns for flies that look

Another View...

by Linda Steiner

BACKED by a fly rod butt and line (previous page), in the top row are a nymph, two beetles, a grasshopper and a cricket imitation. Left to right, they use beaver fur, turkey wing, and the rest deer hair. At the bottom left, the two dry flies include fox fur and wood duck flank feather. Hollow deer hair is almost unsinkable, making it a favorite for patterns fished in fast water.

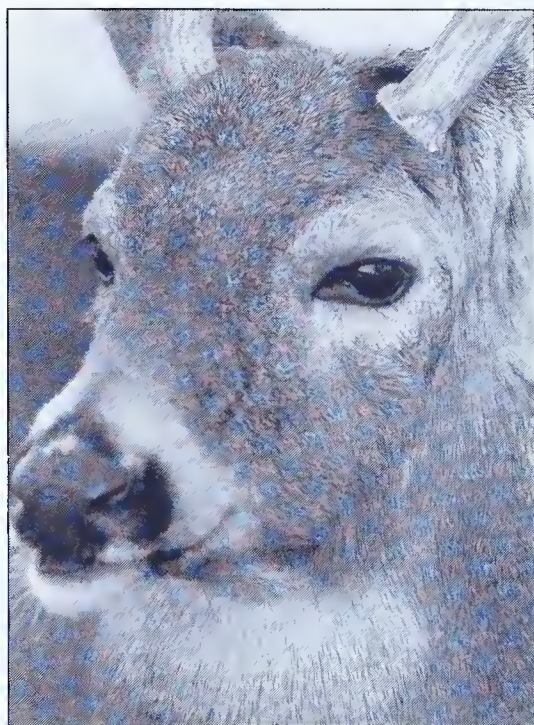
like beetles, grasshoppers, crickets, inchworms, spiders, crayfish, hellgrammites, minnows, and more. They also make “flies” that don’t look like anything alive, but that fish will bite on anyway.

With so much to create, a flytier needs a full “palette” to work from. Where to find all the colors and textures and qualities to make the mayfly’s sheer wings, the beetle’s shiny ones, the hopper’s chunky body, and the damselfly’s slim one, and make them either float or sink on cue? In the multitude of feathers and furs of wildlife, of course.

Today’s fly fishing is rooted in the sporting tradition of the English. When tying, they used what they had at hand, which was hair and hides from game. When the sport came to America, the fly patterns, or tying directions, were those of the Old Country, including wildlife ingredients. Some of these patterns persist today because they still catch trout. Some are relics, because better patterns were developed, or because the animals they were tied from are now rare, like the polar bear, or extinct, like the Indian crow, and no longer available.

Happily for the flytier, other types of wildlife are plentiful and they continue to use the furs and feathers of game animals in remarkable ways. There’s the white-tailed deer, for instance. Hunters can take the antlers and venison, all the trout fisherman wants is its hide.

To the tier, deer hair is special because it is hollow. The air trapped inside makes it float. It can be laid atop the hook for grasshopper or caddis fly wings, secured and pulled back over itself to form a beetle body or a “Humpy” dry fly, or tied upright as wings. Deer hair can also be cinched in bunches against a hook, so that it flares all around. When clipped to shape, it makes



a buoyant surface rider that takes rough water trout. Deer hair dyes well, too, so tiers can get the green of inchworms or the black of bugs, or indulge their imagination.

The deer’s tail, especially if the white hairs are soft and wavy, is great for streamer flies. Streamers are make-believe minnows. The tail hairs are used for such underwater flies because they don’t float, like the winter body fur. A long clump of deer tail, natural or dyed, tied on top of the hook over a silver tinsel body makes an excellent early season trout taker.

Pennsylvania’s other big game, the black bear, is not forgotten by fishermen. Its hair has curl, which gives streamers realistic movement, and it’s already custom-colored for flies needing black hair wings. That “pasture grizzly,” the woodchuck, contributes the coarse, dark tail of the Ausable Wulff dry fly and the wing of the Llama streamer.

The cottontail rabbit provides soft gray underfur for dubbing fly bodies. Dubbing means winding fur-coated waxed thread around a hook so it looks like a meaty insect body. Rabbit fur is especially suited to wet flies, which, as the name implies, sink, and for imitating nymphs, the creep-

ing or swimming underwater form of many insects. There are many color shades on a rabbit skin, and tiers are inventive at using them all.

From a gray squirrel, the flytier mainly wants the tail. The tier clips off a section of long hairs and ties it over the body of a streamer, like the Squirrel Tail or Picket Pin, to add bulk, length, color and fin motion. For a switch, tiers will use the fox squirrel's warm orange, or even the rusty red squirrel for smaller flies. The belly fur of the fox squirrel is the correct color dubbing for some imitation stonefly nymphs.

To tie the March Brown and Light Hendrickson flies, red fox fur is needed for the "fawn" and "pinkish cream" shades the patterns require. The "buff" cream on the fox's belly is used for the Light Cahill, a pattern which represents a light colored mayfly that appears on Pennsylvania trout streams in June and is a favorite hatch of anglers.

Strips from the mottled feathers at the inner edge of the wild turkey's wing can be used for fly wings and wingpads and as the "dorsal fin" and "tail" on the Muddler Minnow streamer.

Grouse back feathers make soft hackle, wound around the hook at the front to look like insect legs. From a grouse tail feather, tiers strip the thin, brown, outer covering of the quill. Soaked in water to be pliable and spiraled over an orange wool body, the quill completes the Breadcrust fly. The ring-necked pheasant contributes versatile tail fibers that are wound on the hook for fly bodies, secured as a wingcase on top, or tied in at the end as a tail.

From the silver-gray flight feathers of mallard ducks, tiers clip matched-size fiber strips. These are paired, right and left, and

tied atop the hook as natural-looking insect wings. Translucent duck quill strips are wound over a yellow floss body for the Golden Quill nymph and a couple of wing fibers finish the pattern's tail.

The mallard's white and gray flank feathers can represent legs, wingcases and upright wings, or be dyed yellow-brown to resemble wood duck feathers. Natural wood duck is favored, when tiers can get it, for imitating the wings of many mayflies.

Canada geese contribute wing-feather fibers to make the long, paired tails of stonefly nymphs and their double wing pads.

For flies that must float, tiers prefer to use water animals, because their fur has a natural, oily repellency. The gray of muskrat underfur is great for the bodies of Blue Dun, Dark Cahill, and Dark Hendrickson dry flies. The guard hairs of muskrat, and of mink, make excellent fly tails for wets and the larger dry fly patterns.

Beavers provide rich brown fur for dubbing bodies and for the collars of caddis pupae imitations. In fact, give a tier just about any animal skin, and he'll find a way to use it on a hook, and a way to make that hook catch trout.

To obtain everything a flytier needs for his hobby, without running out of money or friends' generosity, it's nearly a necessity to go hunting and trapping. What a perfect justification. The tier can actually make these sports sound obligatory, especially if he has a spouse who likes trout.

"Gee, I'm sorry, honey, I can't get to the (faucet repair, snow shoveling, dog washing) because I've got to go hunting (or trapping) if we're going to have any trout next spring."

Yes, it's a tough job, but we trout anglers will "suffer" through it.

***This completes
a romantic
circle, using bits
of the furred
and feathered
wild to catch
some of the
finny.***

IN THE INTRODUCTION to his 1948 environmental classic, *A Sand County Almanac*, Aldo Leopold wrote: "There are some who can live without wild things, and some who cannot. These essays are the delights and dilemmas of one who cannot." I was born that year, 90 seconds prior to my twin brother, John. Both of us grew up as boys who could not live without wild things, and in that respect, we remain unchanged.

John wrote under this heading in 1990. Because we are identical twins, you might detect some similarity in our writings. We both have rural, mountainous districts in northern Pennsylvania. But it wasn't always that way.

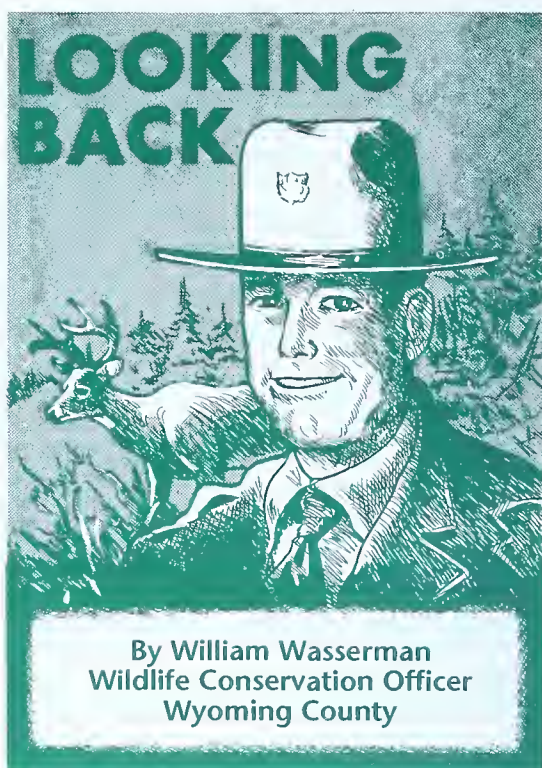
I have 18 years with the Game Commission and am currently serving in Wyoming County. For the first 12 years I was assigned to Montgomery and Philadelphia counties, along with stints in several other locations throughout southeastern Pennsylvania.

I've been married for 23 years to my lovely wife, Marianne. She is my best friend and best critic. I also have two wonderful children, Jesse and Sarah.

My career with the Game Commission has been an exciting one. While preparing to write this column, I scoured more than 1,000 prosecution reports and documents. Over the next 12 months we will travel from bustling cities to remote, mountain areas. We will share the loneliness of long night patrols and feel the exhilaration of face-to-face confrontations with dangerous poachers. These essays are my delights and dilemmas. I hope you enjoy them.

Of all my duties, dealing with hunting accidents is most peculiar. My emotions are thrown into disarray whenever I have to investigate one. On the one hand, I find them intriguing and want to determine why they happen, if they could have been prevented, and if criminal negligence was involved. Putting all the pieces together is interesting work.

Unfortunately, hunting accidents have a big downside. They're always



fused with tragedy, not just for the victim but the offender as well. Entire families can be torn apart. Sometimes I have to wade through a lot of pain and tears to get the answers I need. I try to remain hardened and unattached, but I can't help feeling a twinge of sadness while interviewing people who've been suddenly hurled into the anguish and suffering caused by a shooting.

It was back in 1987 when I found myself kneeling beside a young man with a hole in his abdomen big enough to stick a writing pen through. He'd been shot by another hunter and left for dead.

Several other WCOs and I were working at Ridley Creek State Park in Delaware County. The deer herd had grown out of control, so an antlerless deer hunt was organized; it brought 200 hunters per day to the park's 2,600 acres.

There are six entrances to the park, but only one was open. The others were guarded by park rangers or state troopers. To make the hunt as safe as

possible, all hunters were assigned zones and were to keep within their confines.

This was the third year a hunt had been held at the park, and they had all gone without a hitch. In fact, most patrol days were downright boring. On December 28, that all changed.

Deputy Bud Kowalewski and I were about to break for coffee when a park ranger, standing along the road, began waving frantically. I stopped and rolled down the window.

"There's a man shot up ahead," the ranger cried, pointing a gloved finger toward a narrow road leading into some brush. "He looks pretty bad."

I drove up the lane and reached the man within seconds. It was 11 o'clock and freezing cold. The sky was overcast and gray, and the body lying upon the bare, frozen ground seemed alien to its surroundings.

Bud and I raced to the man's side. Blood was oozing through a perfectly round hole in the front of his coat, just below his chest. He was conscious, but his face was ashen and he looked panic-stricken. He was in his mid-20s, and I hoped his youth would help him pull through. He was on his back, breathing in short, rapid gasps. I felt his pulse and it was racing. His eyes were in a fixed gaze.

"Am I hurt bad? Am I going to die?" he pleaded, never breaking his eerie stare at the bleak winter sky.

Deputy Kowalewski was first to respond. "I'm a conservation officer and a registered nurse," he reassured him. "You're going to be okay. More help is coming, but until then I want to open your coat and look at your wound. Just relax a moment."

A Vietnam veteran who saw a lot of action during his tour, Bud had saved a lot of gunshot victims when not so much as a band aid was available. While Bud tended to the wound, I spoke confidently to the man in an attempt to calm him. He was very frightened, and I didn't want his heart pumping any faster than it already was.

Other park rangers were standing by,



Question

May I spotlight deer during the muzzle-loader season?

Answer

Yes, you may spotlight in the muzzleloader season. The only time spotlighting is prohibited is during the regular antlered and antlerless deer seasons.

assisting where they could, and I asked where the shooter was.

"I don't know," a ranger said. "He was gone before we got here — guess he panicked and fled."

I looked back at the injured man. Bud had his coat and shirt open, and purplish blood seeped from his wound.

Organ damage. This guy could die right here, I thought. I wanted to ask about the person who shot him but didn't want him to talk. He was breathing rapidly and conversation would make it difficult to get oxygen. I knew if we didn't soon get a description, the offender would probably escape.

I leaned close to the victim and said, "I'm going to ask you some questions. If your answer is yes, blink your eyes once. If your answer is no, blink twice. Okay?"

The injured man blinked one time and seemed to relax a little. It was as if the opportunity to focus on something besides his wound calmed him.

"Good," I said. "Did you see the person who shot you?"

One blink was his reply, and from there I established that the offender was in his 20s, wore camouflage orange clothes and had a beard.

Before long I heard the high-pitched wail of emergency sirens, and a large number of paramedics and police

arrived. WCO Richard Feaster was with them. He had been interviewing several witnesses and learned that the man responsible for the accident had fired three round of 00 buckshot at a deer. One of the pellets struck the victim, who was wearing orange clothes but was standing behind heavy brush.

Three spent 12-gauge Winchester shotgun shells were picked up 200 feet from the injured man. We were certain they had been ejected from the offender's gun. Several paramedics began working on the victim, so I motioned Bud to break away and we set out to locate the perpetrator.

The park is crisscrossed with dozens of thick, brushy areas bordered by hundreds of acres of forest. The possibilities for a fugitive to hide were endless.

As Bud and I drove along one of many blacktop roads, looking for anyone fitting the victim's description, Bud picked up a portable radio and instructed all personnel guarding park exits not to let anyone out because we were searching for a suspect involved in a shooting.

"Thanks, Bud," I said. "I'm glad one of us is thinking today."

"Do you suppose we'll find him?" Bud asked.

"Hard to say. He could be too scared to think clearly," I suggested. "If so, he might still be around. Otherwise . . . I mean, if this guy is the cold, calculating type, he's probably long gone."

"Hey," Bud exclaimed. "There's a guy over to your right who looks lost or confused. Let's go talk to him."

I turned into a parking lot at the bottom of a shallow hill and stopped. Bud and I approached a hunter who had been standing on the macadam, looking back and forth as if searching for something.

"State conservation officer," I announced. "We're investigating a hunting accident that occurred about 30 minutes ago. Someone was badly wounded."

I thought this might be the man we

were looking for; he had a beard and was dressed in orange hunting clothes. "Did you see anyone come through here recently, wearing camo orange?" I asked.

"No, officer, I haven't. I was just about to quit and go home." He was becoming restless and uneasy as he continued. "I did see someone shoot at some deer about a half hour ago. It was over that way," he said, pointing toward the accident scene.

"Did you get a good look at him?" Bud asked intently.

"No. He was too far away. All I can tell you is that he had orange on. Other than that, I really didn't see him well."

I couldn't help thinking he knew more than he was saying. "Let me see some identification, sir," I said. His eyes darted back to me, then shifted nervously about. For a second I thought he was going to run. He began unbuttoning his coat with trembling fingers.

"Here, sir, how about letting me hold that shotgun for you," Bud offered guardedly.

The hunter handed Bud his gun and reached into his coat, pulling out a wallet. He thumbed past several credit cards and handed me his driver's license. "I'd like to see what kind of ammunition you're using, too," I instructed, while writing his name and other pertinent information on a notepad.

"I only have a few shells. They're not even mine — my cousin gave them to me. I hadn't planned on hunting today, until he invited me to come along. What's the problem, officer?"

He was digging into his pockets and talking at the same time when he pulled out two red shotgun shells. They were both Winchester 12-gauge 00 buckshot. Bud ejected three more from his shotgun.

They were common rounds, but I didn't believe it was mere coincidence that he possessed them. "What does your cousin look like?" I asked.

"He's about my age, 22 years old. He has a beard, brown hair and is built like

me. Why? Is he in some kind of trouble?"

"I don't know yet," I said, glancing at Bud. The expression on his face told me we were both thinking the same thing.

"What kind of hunting outfit was he wearing today?" I continued.

"Full camo orange," he said soberly. "I've been looking all over for him. His truck was right here this morning when we split up. I rode in with him. I don't know why he would leave without me." As he spoke, his tone filled with apprehension as he began to realize his cousin may have shot someone.

"What was the make and color of your cousin's truck?" I pressed.

Realizing the seriousness of the situation, his eyes bored into mine. "I knew he was in some kind of trouble," he sputtered. "When I saw his truck was gone and you game wardens started asking me all these questions, I knew something was wrong. He drives a black pickup."

I immediately notified all units to be on lookout for the truck and to detain its occupants if found. In only a matter of minutes Park Ranger Mike Seasholtz

intercepted the truck. Bud and I drove out to assist him.

The driver admitted everything. He was the one we were looking for and was attempting to find a way out of the park, but couldn't because all the exits were guarded. He'd removed his orange hunting clothes and hid them, with his gun, behind the seat to disguise himself.

He showed no remorse for the man he shot. Instead he whined and begged about his own fate. "What's going to happen to me? Am I going to jail?" he cried. It was difficult for me to understand someone like him. I probably never will.

The injured hunter suffered liver damage but he recovered. Without cooperation from the many conservation officers, park rangers and state troopers, the offender would likely have gotten away.

Like all hunting accidents, there was sorrow and pain for those involved. Their suffering became a part of me that day. As officers, we learn to put such feelings aside, but we never forget them. Still, piecing everything together is always a fascinating and rewarding experience.



FLASHBACK

As I look upon the future conservation program not only for Pennsylvania, but for the whole country, three important factors, one equally as important as the other, are impressed upon me — education, research, management. We shall have to begin educating our school children concerning the value of our natural resources, starting in the elementary schools by developing an attitude toward the protection, preservation and wise use of those resources, and continuing on through the higher grades both in theory and in practice.

— Ross L. Leffler, February 1941

A Bird For All Seasons

NO MATTER what the weather or time of year, the male Carolina wren is out and about, singing his brilliantly versatile “teakettle, teakettle, teakettle” song. With hundreds of song variations, this wren has been called a “master ventriloquist.” Sometimes his mate will join him, adding her low-pitched, less musical, buzzy trill when the male sings his second “teakettle.” Ornithologists call this kind of harmonizing “dueting.”

Possessing the loudest voice of any bird its size, the wren’s song reaches me through the insulated walls of our mountaintop home even in the depths of winter.

Carolina wrens are basically southern birds, our only member of a large group of tropical American wrens. Common residents of the Carolinas (hence their popular name), they are “stay-at-homes,” remaining in the same place year round. But whenever northern winters moderate, young Carolina wrens looking for new home territories begin to push northward as far as New England and southern Canada. Unfortunately, the next severe winter kills most of them, and it takes another series of warm winters for the birds to again move up from the Southeast.

I remember the last time they were killed off in Pennsylvania, the bitter winter of 1977-78, when the remaining patches of snow didn’t leave here until late April.

At that time Carolina wrens were

occasional birds of our thickets and woodland, but friends in the valley had had them coming regularly to their bird feeders and nesting in their dooryards. The valley dwellers knew what they’d lost and mourned the birds’ passing while I, unacquainted

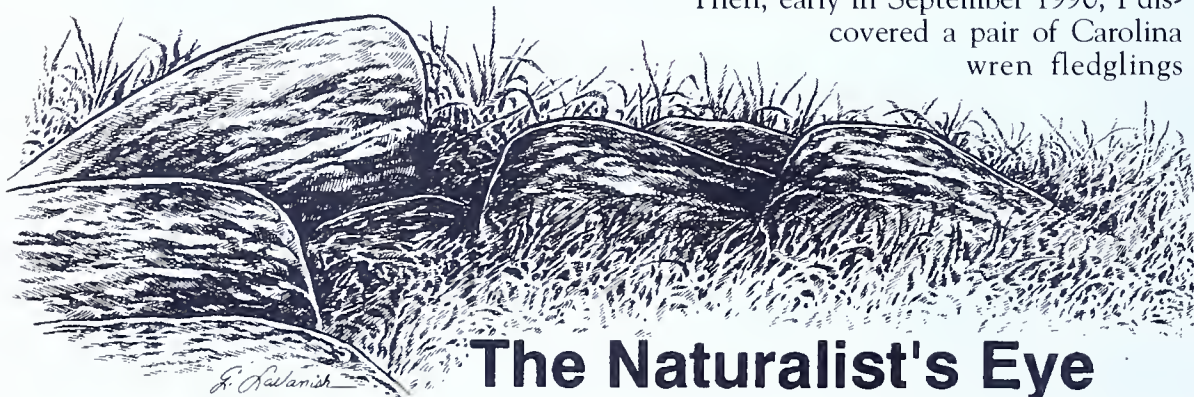
with their charm, could not fully sympathize. Just another wren, I thought, envisioning the bouncy, hyperactive, winter wrens and the pushy, loud-mouthed house wrens.

How wrong I was. Not only are Carolina wrens the largest and most attractive members of the wren family, sporting rusty-red backs and white “eyebrow” lines, they are also the most charming, possessing seemingly irrepressible good spirits. Although it took them 12 years to fully colonize our mountaintop, I have happily charted their course in my journal since my initial sightings years ago.

At first they appeared sporadically in our thickets, during late summer and early fall, announcing their arrival with unending songs. Whole choirs of Carolina wrens celebrated the mornings, and I quickly voted them my second favorite choristers, after the wood thrushes.

In fact, for several years I could depend on Carolina wrens arriving and singing just as the wood thrushes quit for the season. Every fall the wrens stayed longer, eventually disappearing by mid-January, driven down into south-facing thickets by the worsening weather.

Then, early in September 1990, I discovered a pair of Carolina wren fledglings



The Naturalist's Eye

sitting on our house ladder. They looked just like their parents except for stubbier tails and a general disheveled, confused appearance; they took off in erratic disarray while their parents fussed in the distance.

I had previously noted the comings and goings of the couple in and out of a long-dead apple tree, but suspected they were using the nest hole as a permanent residence, not as a nursery. Carolina wrens, though, are prolific, raising two or three broods of four to six young every year. For each brood a new nest is built by both parents, the male usually starting the process and the female helping more and more until she takes over the site as the sole incubator of the brown-spotted white or pale pink eggs.

Apparently the July-arriving couple had had a late family on our property.

The following spring I found my first nest, in a blackberry vine twining over an abandoned garden fence, just as the nestlings were fledging. And, for the first time, one couple stayed here year round while another occupied the thicket above our First Field.

On cold winter mornings I could step outside and listen to the males singing — one beside me in our old lilac bush, the other in the thicket, his song traveling down across the field like an echo.

Since then, Carolina wrens have been as common as cardinals. Needless to say, I am now an avid Carolina wren fan and, as such, am willing to brave discomfort and ridicule in pursuit of my favorite "stars." That's why, last May, I spent many hours up in our old barn, sitting in a cardboard packing box.

The saga began on May 2 when my husband came into the

house chuckling. "I just found a Carolina wren nest with six eggs in it," he announced.

"Where?" I asked eagerly. But instead of answering, he led me into the upper story of our Pennsylvania bank barn. There, among piles of boxes filled with our eldest son Steve's belongings, a pair of Carolina wrens had chosen an open box in which to build their nest.

I looked closer in the dim light and howled with laughter. I knew that Carolina wrens were famous for picking unusual nesting and roosting sites, but this one beat most of the bizarre stories I had read.

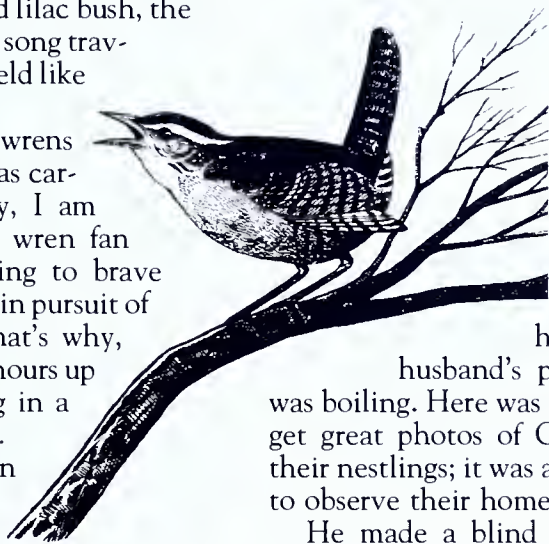
Steve had filled one particularly large box with an assortment of cast-off clothing, topping the pile with his favorite stuffed cartoon character — Bloom County's Opus the penguin — which lay on its side facing the side of the box. The semi-circular space formed by the base of the penguin's outsized bill and his potbelly provided the perfect space for the wrens' bulky, domed nest.

The female began incubating the next day, fed by the faithful male. Fearful of disrupting or even scaring off the pair, we stayed away, except for an occasional check

to make sure she and the nest were still intact. She always sat tight until the last moment before slipping off like a wraith and quietly returning as soon as we left the barn.

Fourteen days later the eggs hatched. By then my husband's photographer blood was boiling. Here was a chance for him to get great photos of Carolina wrens and their nestlings; it was also a chance for me to observe their home life.

He made a blind by turning a large



packing box upside down, and then cutting a door in one side and a window in the other.

He balanced it on a piece of plywood which spanned the gaping floor planks, and equipped the inside with a cast-off kitchen chair. We were in business, a mere five feet from Opus and company.

I waited until the nestlings were five days old and the weather was warm before starting my daily hour's watch of their activities.

That first day I slipped into the box and stealthily pushed the window open. By then the nestlings were covered with dark gray down, but their eyes were still closed. After a short wait, one parent flew in and landed on the edge of the nest box.

Immediately the nestlings started peeping. The parent, using Opus's stomach as a platform, leaned into the dark nest to poke an insect down the nearest gaping beak.

Up until then it had noticed nothing

wrong, but barn swallows nesting in the rafters started scolding.

This put the parent on alert and it started hopping around on the barn floor as if searching for an enemy. Since I had been unable to completely close the door of the blind, it found the gap and, cocking its head, peered in at me. I never moved, even when it flew up to the top of the door and looked me over and then hopped all over the box top.

Finally, it flew to the barn door and waited for the other parent to arrive. When it did, it somehow communicated to it that I was in the box because that bird also climbed over my box and looked in the door. All of this communicating and investigating was done silently. The nestlings also remained quiet.

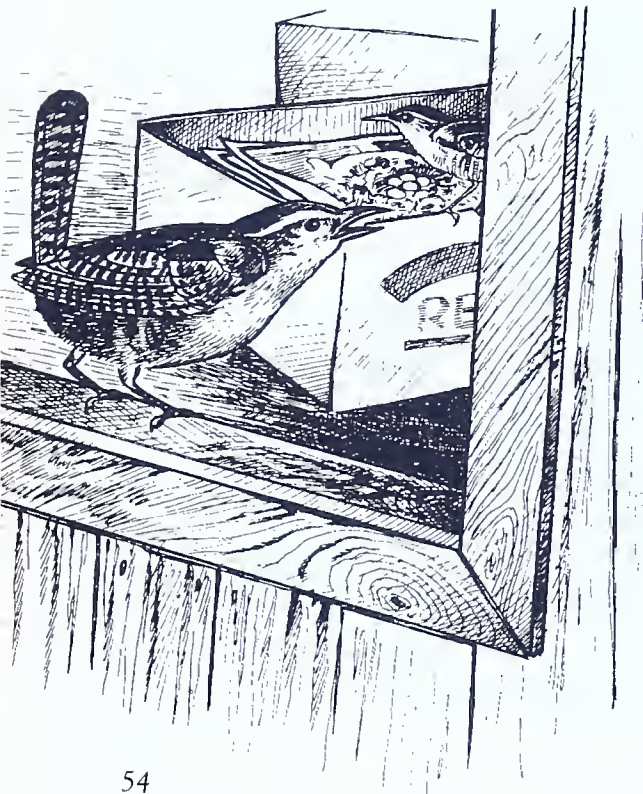
At last they were assured that I would not harm their nestlings and later, when my husband went in with his camera, they subjected him to the same silent scrutiny. From then on, they hardly registered our visits. They knew we were there, but we had passed inspection.

For more than a week I watched as the nestlings feathered out, called louder, and were fed more often a wide assortment of long, dangling caterpillars — lime-green, white or brown — a lesser number of spiders, and a few sow bugs. They went from three feedings that first day to 36 per hour by the last day, both parents working furiously toward the end. The nestlings, five in all, finally burst through the roof of the nest the day before they fledged.

Of course, I had long since written to our son out in Nebraska about the nest.

"I hope they don't ruin Opus," he said.

Carolina wrens are sanitary creatures. Time after time I watched as a youngster would signal the attending parent in some indefinable way just as the parent finished feeding it. The parent would pause, the nestling would defecate, and the parent



would either help pull it out or wait until the young had fully emitted a white fecal sac. Then the parent would carry it off in its beak.

Many birds do this for awhile, but the sanitation often breaks down near the end as the parents are too busy feeding to keep up with such matters. Not so the Carolina wrens.

Even as the overgrown nestlings started beating apart the nest, they continued their exemplary toilet manners. Once they fledged, I was able to present our son with a nearly immaculate and odorless stuffed Opus.

And fledge they did, right on schedule. At 14 days of age in early afternoon, I found an empty nest and fledglings peeping on the barn overhang, under the tractor, and out in the field grasses. Their parents flew frantically from one to the

other, chattering answers to their peeping and feeding them.

Those on the barn overhang finally gathered up their nerve and sailed down to join their bolder siblings. I wished the little family well, grateful for their trusting nature that had allowed me intimate glimpses of their home life.

So this January day I sit inside at my computer, writing my journal while freezing rain ticks away on the windows. A Carolina wren lands on the window ledge and peers in. Minutes later his cheery song rings out from the back porch, reminding me that he is truly a bird for all seasons until, that is, we have another bitter winter. Then I, too, will join the mourning northern birdwatching community as we adjust to several years without Carolina wrens. It's almost enough to make me look forward to global warming.

Fun Games

Guess Who?

By Connie Mertz

1. I make a small hollowed-out nest made of dead grasses to keep me warm in winter. I also make tunnels beneath the snow. I'm usually the culprit that chews the bark off trees and shrubs.
2. I am considered a furbearer and make my home in marshy areas. My lodge is usually found in less than two feet of water, but I also burrow in streambanks. I can be identified by my tracks that show the drag of my tail.
3. If you see hemlock branches strewn on the ground it could mean I am up in the tree enjoying a diet of pine needles and bark. I am a rodent that craves salt.
4. I am a mammal found mainly in forest thickets of northern Pennsylvania. From November to March, I am a winter-white color. My feet are covered with fur one inch thick, which leave powder-puff tracks.
5. I am a common species most at home in oak trees where I live in a den. In January, my courtship ritual begins, and I scamper up and down tree trunks in pursuit of a mate. I am usually not welcome at backyard bird feeders.
6. I am a large rodent who needs wetlands to survive. I have webbed hind feet to enable me to maneuver in the water. For winter food, I store mounds of twigs. I am an excellent dam builder.

answers on p. 64



THE ARCHERY GOLF Tournament is the United Bowhunters' main fund raiser, and as past experience has shown, this fine, family activity is extremely popular. The group plans on holding at least two such shoots next month.

Bowhunters United

By Keith C. Schuyler

ONE OF THE fastest growing archery organizations in the state doesn't even own a clubhouse or a range, but since 1985, United Bowhunters of Pennsylvania has grown from its 15 charter members to more than 2,400. The nucleus of the group was essentially an outgrowth of the Pennsylvania Bowhunter Society, which in turn was formerly Pennsylvania Professional Bowhunters Society — formed in 1975.

For a time, membership in United Bowhunters remained somewhat static.

But hard work by its officers, and a diversity of activities, caught the attention of archers wanting to put some fun into the sport between hunting seasons. The primary thrust of the organization, however, is to encourage and support practice and hunting with the bow and arrow.

Joseph Maddock of Bryn Athyn is the current president, and a catalyst for the group's considerable activity is club secretary Bill Fehon. Those interested in this organization can contact him at Box 732, Bryn Athyn, PA 19009.

No one person could possibly be expected to volunteer the time to handle necessary office duties as the membership swelled. Consequently, the organization hired executive secretary Aileen Synnestvedt and executive director Thomas Kolb.



THE OBJECT of archery golf is to get from the tee to the target in the fewest number of shots. To avoid damage to greens, the targets (3x3-foot styrofoam blocks) are set to the side of each green.

Why am I singling out United Bowhunters of Pennsylvania for this attention when some 100 local archery clubs and state and national organizations are found in the commonwealth?

Well, with the number of licensed bowhunters likely to exceed 300,000 for the 1992-1993 seasons, while many archery clubs have faded or are struggling, it would seem UBP is doing the best job satisfying the needs and wants of today's archers. Archers are blessed with a wide variety of activities — from 3D shoots to conventional competition — and there are probably more bowmen involved in the sport than ever before. But this variety of choices has probably hurt some groups.

But what holds members?

When an archery organization increases its membership more than six times in a few years — as UBP has — it must have something going for it. Perhaps a review of the group's activities could help other organizations that are having trouble holding members and building interest. Or, individuals who have no affiliation might want to contact Bill Fehon.

Good publicity is necessary for the success of any organization. For more than four years, Tom Reilly produced a fine quarterly newsletter for UBP. As membership increased, it was decided to utilize the tabloid *Eastern Bowhunting* as a vehicle to publicize UBP activities for members as well as the general archery public. In addition, the organization planned a special bowhunting issue to be distributed directly to members following the fall hunting seasons, making a total of 13 newsletters each year.

A great fund raiser for UBP has been its archery-golf tournament, which is held at least once a year. Some of the photos accompanying this article were taken by Fehon at two of last year's tournaments.

Archery-golf, once known as "bonarro"



in western states, is a tradition largely forgotten in this part of the country. There is a suspicion that archery-golf may have led to establishment of archery field courses because their course layouts are similar.

Joseph Egner is credited for the successful introduction of archery-golf to UBP. Credits also go to the administration of Horsham Valley Golf Club, which permits use of club facilities for the archery events. The game is popular, as evidenced by advanced registrations that filled the quota of competitors (180). Adults pay \$15 a head and the fee is \$10 for those under 16 years of age; nonmembers pay an extra \$5.

Rules are Simple

Rules are simple. Ten archers are assigned to each of the 18 tees. Arrow fletching must be a minimum of four inches in length. The "hole" is a 3x3 foot block of styrofoam with a four-inch red spot painted on all sides. These targets are placed just off the edge of the greens, possibly several hundred yards away. All participants are urged to wear fluorescent orange or bright clothing for safety.

Shooting is signaled at 8 a.m. by a shotgun blast, and all first shots from each tee must be with rubber blunt-tipped heads. Spring-loaded heads such as Judos, which tend to stay close to where they hit, are permitted for in-between shots because the ground is hard during winter.

Cash prizes are awarded. Two archery-golf shoots are scheduled for this year, on Jan. 31 and Feb. 28, and another may be held on Feb. 14.

UBP also conducts an annual carp shoot in conjunction with "fun days," scheduled in June at Green Lake Reservoir near Upper Perkiomen High School. All shooting is from boats, and cash awards are made for the longest, shortest, heaviest, lightest and the most fish.

To recognize proficient bowhunters, a "Master Big Game" award was established for those who have made five kills of any big game species. All kills may be of one species. Recognition is also given for five small game or varmint kills, which must be five different species.

A "Distinguished Bowhunter" category covers any who qualified for both large and small game awards. For the reporting period, John Cassidy was the only hunter to be recognized in this class. All successes must be authenticated by a photo, sworn statement from a witness or sworn affirmation of the shots. Rules of fair chase apply in each instance.

Some interesting statistics surfaced when I studied the program for the years 1985-87.

Entries in the big game category included 88 white-tailed deer, 13 black bear, six caribou, one bighorn sheep, one sitka deer, three turkeys and one pronghorn antelope. The shortest successful shot at deer was four yards; longest, 40 yards; average, 16 yards.

Bows utilized were: compound, 46; recurve, 43; longbow, 43. Types of arrow shafts: aluminum, 54; wood, 36; glass, 10. Replaceable blade broadheads were shot

by 41; 67 members preferred to sharpen their own.

UBP is deeply involved with bowhunter education and hunter ethics. They've participated in the National Bowhunter Education Program course to develop new instructors, and a number of UBP members were certified at a recent session hosted by the Commission at the Harrisburg headquarters.

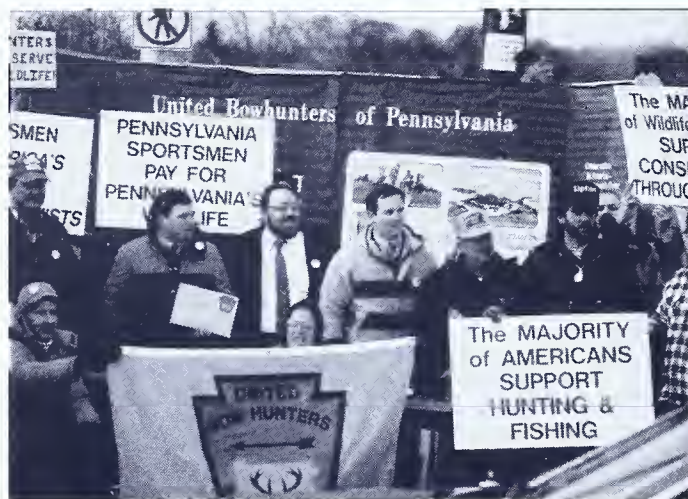
An important program, CARES (Courteous, Alert, Respectful, Ethical and Sincere) has been instituted to encourage good hunter/landowner relations. Through this program, a perforated card is signed by both landowner and hunter. Each takes the half with the signature of the other as evidence that hunting is permitted and that the archer will abide by the CARES creed.

When property owners became concerned about the issue of antlerless deer licenses for Philadelphia County, UBP offered a reward for the arrest and conviction of any poachers.

To encourage more young people to become involved in archery, UBP sponsored an essay contest modeled after the Commission's SPORT essay contest. Details of that contest were published in the October 1992 *Game News*.

These are among the events this active organization has sponsored, most on an annual basis. They add to the enjoyment of membership. Plans are underway to move some activities to other parts of the state, to better accommodate those who live some distance from the hub of action.

UBP spends a lot of time promoting hunting in general and fighting for sound wildlife management. For example, UBP has actively supported Hunters Sharing the Harvest



IN RECENT YEARS, the United Bowhunters of Pennsylvania has been on hand to support the rights of all hunters during the controlled, shotgun-only hunt at Tyler State Park, where anti-hunting groups often stage demonstrations.

GAIL DAVIDSON, accepts her award for winning one of the archery-golf contests at a tournament last year.

program; members donated more than 1,000 pounds of venison to feed the needy. In addition, UBP donated \$500 to administer the program.

A "Tyler Park Committee" is headed by southeastern director John Eppinger, Jr., to counter anti-hunting activity that has become a part of the controlled hunt there. Although the special hunt is limited to shotguns, UBP lent its weight to a protest against anti-hunters who target the event. At the third of four such hunts, UBP members were vastly outnumbered by antis, but their 80 archers supported the gunners.

UBP also surveyed its members concerning the electronic tracking arrow. This device consists of a transmitter in the hunting arrow and a locator that guides the hunter to an animal that retains the arrow after being shot.

There were 368 negative responses, eight in favor of the device, and four who had no opinion. Results were sent to the Game Commission.

An interesting addenda to this information reveals that, of those who responded, 74 percent primarily shoot the compound bow, 20.5 percent, the recurve, and 5.5 percent are longbow shooters.

UBP maintains close liaison with the Game Commission, and the organization is represented at all of the agency's meetings. It was active in pressing for extending the archery deer season into the first week of November.

Biggest event to date for UBP will be the first convention, scheduled this year for the weekend of March 12-14 at Penn



Harris Hotel and Convention Center in Harrisburg. A Saturday night banquet features renowned whitetail expert and archer Dr. David Samuel, who will talk about bowhunting in Africa.

Seminar speakers during the three-day session will include Biologist Gary Alt. His subject will be "The Bears of North America." Twelve other speakers include leading archery personalities in the U.S. And there will be 50 exhibitors, limited to those who cater to archers and archery in its various forms.

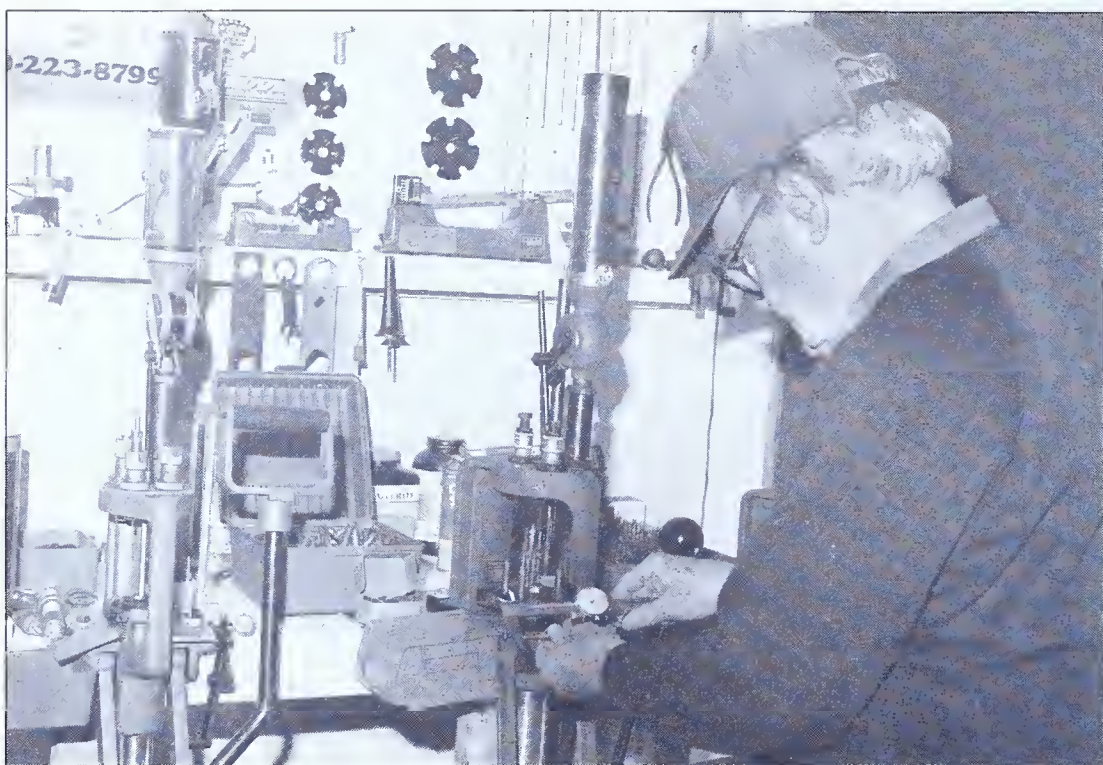
There is a fee for attending the convention, and costs are less for members.

It seems obvious that concerned archers are willing to spend more than just money in pursuit of their sport, and they increasingly realize the importance of fighting those who would end bowhunting as a legitimate sport and viable wildlife management tool.

UBP and groups like it are striving to keep archers active and well-informed on the issues. It's only through organization that we can effectively battle the threat to our sport and save it for generations to come.

Commission 800 Numbers

Within Pennsylvania, use the agency's toll-free 800 numbers to contact a wildlife conservation officer. For the Northwest Region, call (800) 533-6764; Southwest, (800) 243-8519; Northcentral, (800) 422-7551; Southcentral, (800) 422-7554; Northeast, (800) 228-0789; and Southeast (800) 228-0791. Phones will be manned around the clock during the major hunting seasons, and about 15 hours a day at other times.



Room for Handloading

By Don Lewis

Photos by Helen Lewis

A POWER SAW whined as I walked into a friend's garage. I stood just inside the door until he finished the cut.

"What are you making now?" I asked. "By the looks of things, you must be building a new garage."

Worse Yet

"Not quite. I'm adding a reloading shop to the back of my garage. For years I've been doing all my reloading in the garage. I freeze in the winter and roast in the

summer. Worse yet, my equipment is scattered all over the place, and I'm constantly battling rust. Because I'm entering a new phase of handloading, I figured it's time to build a room designed especially for the job.

"With a small gas furnace and window air conditioner, I won't have a temperature problem. Also, all my gear will be organized and in one place. And you can bet that my reloading bench will be strong, and I mean strong."

That conversation took place back in the 1950s, and my friend planned to buy an RCBS Model A press. The Model A was made extra strong, designed for making bullets, hence he wanted his bench to be able to withstand the force necessary to swage bullets.

Over the years, I have owned four re-



RELOADING is an increasingly popular activity. And while a lot of equipment and space is not necessary to become involved in this hobby, a person should give some thought to finding a space where he can keep all his equipment and supplies organized and still have room to expand.

loading shops. My first had an 8x8 reloading room. It was too small. When I purchased an old farm house, I set up my equipment in a uninsulated cement block milk house. The heater was a small gas burner. It made sufficient heat, but moisture formed on the walls and ceiling. At times, water actually dripped from the ceiling and rust formed on all metal surfaces. It was a nightmare.

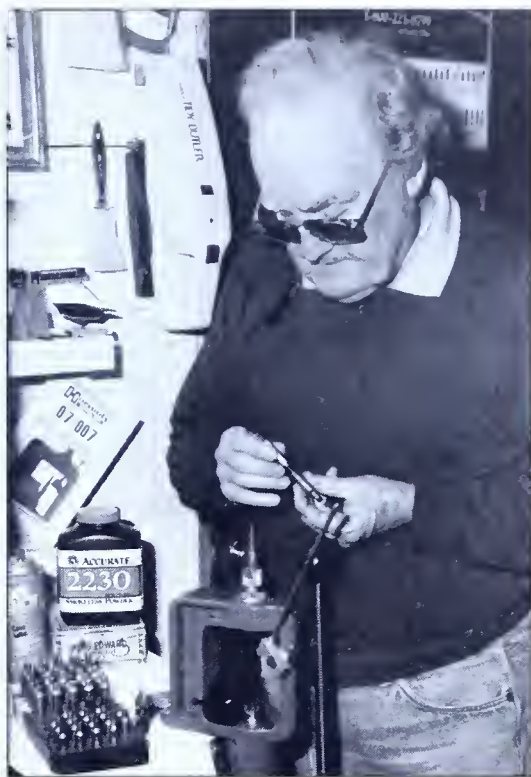
My third shop was in a small wooden building. Space wasn't a problem, but heating it was, and moisture and rust were my constant companions. When a new highway wiped out that building, I put my present shop on top of a new garage. It is insulated, and has hot water baseboard heat. I cool it with several fans.

Most handloaders, of course, don't need a special reloading shop, but it's a good idea to have at least a reloading room. I've seen some really nice setups in basements, garages and attics. One ingenious fellow built a reloading room, complete with a reloading cabinet, at the end of a 5-foot wide hallway.

Ingenuity plays a large role in setting up a shop. If I seem to place a lot of emphasis on having a special room or building, it's because I have either seen or gone through the problems associated with trying to work in cramped quarters.

On the other hand, I'm not suggesting a person spend hundreds or thousands of dollars on a reloading setup. With close to 40 years of working with other handloaders, though, plus the problems I have encountered with my own shops, I know many handloaders are not properly set up.

How much space does one need? Well, the fellow who built a compact reloading room at the end of a hallway proved that it doesn't take much. Let me also point out, however, that while he can load with his ingenious folding cabinet setup, he has no room to expand, and that's the demon that



eventually defeats most handloaders. Here's a good example.

Someone called for some advice on constructing a reloading room in his basement. The basement was fairly large but pretty well crammed with cupboards, shelves and household appliances. The only free space was a small area behind a gas furnace, which he intended to partition off for a reloading room. A quick measurement with my pocket ruler showed that room could be no larger than four feet wide and five feet long.

Making a Mistake

I told him the area might be suitable for his rifle press and present equipment, but that he would have no room to expand. He assured me he had no intentions of doing so; he said he had all the equipment he needed to reload for his deer outfit. I mildly hinted he was making a mistake.

After looking around the basement, I suggested removing some shelving and a wall-mounted cabinet. This would allow him to build a room that would be approximately 8x14.

When I told him that, he threw up his



Developing loads for accuracy requires work at the shooting range as well as the loading bench. To get the most out of handloading, it's also important to keep meticulous records.

hands in despair. He didn't tell me to leave, but he made it clear that I was giving bad advice. I left with a feeling my 20-mile trip was a waste of time. In a matter of days, I forgot about it.

Two years later, I heard from him again. He called to say I'd been absolutely right; the room was too small from day one, and when he added a shotshell press, he literally had no working room at all. He was happy to tell me that his "new" room was 10x16, and that he now had two rifle presses, a casting furnace and a shotshell press. Best of all, there was still some room for expansion.

Same Percentage

Although the cost of handloading components has gone up, so has the cost of a factory round. Hardly surprising, the percentage of savings is about the same as it was when I started. A 50-grain .222 factory round costs about 50 cents each in boxes of 20. It costs about 17 cents to reload a .222. That's three reloads for the price of a factory round, pretty much what's it been for years.

In the post World War II years, handloaders were quick to say that the reloaded shell was superior to the factory round. I believed that, too, until I bought a chronograph to check some suspicions I had about the listings in many handloading manuals.

In addition, I did some sand penetration tests comparing reloads and factory rounds with the same bullets and reported velocities and discovered that the reloads

failed to penetrate as much sand as the factory rounds.

It certainly isn't true that reloaded shells are far more powerful than factory shells. Factory shells have proven themselves in the field for decades. Handloading has the advantages of saving money and tailoring a load for a particular rifle or shooting situation.

I've explained that three shells can be reloaded for the price of a factory round, but let's take it a step further. Last summer, I took on the task of reloading 2,000 rounds of .223 ammo for a prairie dog hunt in Nebraska. That represents 100 boxes, and at \$9.95 per box (list price), that much ammo would cost \$995. At 18 cents each for the reloaded round, my total expenditure was just \$360 — a savings of roughly \$635.

Many big game hunters are quick to point out that saving money isn't important because they seldom shoot a box of shells in a season. It's also a fair assumption that a good many animals escape because of hunters failing to practice during the off season.

Handloading opens the door for more economical shooting, and the more a person shoots, the better he becomes. Handloading undeniably reduces the cost of a cartridge. But in most instances, these savings are translated into more shooting — not monetary gains — and that can do nothing but enhance a hunter's chances for success.

Tailoring a load is not as simple as it sounds. When tailoring for accuracy, a good bit of work is required at the bench and at the shooting range. Also, it can't be done properly without a chronograph. But tailoring a load isn't always done for accuracy purposes.

As an example, for a particular type of hunting, the handloader may want to use

a particular bullet style/velocity combination that isn't available in a factory round. By obtaining the proper components, he can assemble pretty much whatever he wants.

I don't need to prove that handloading is a worthwhile investment. Tens of thousands of shooters and hunters are dedicated handloaders. However, a large number of sportsmen are a bit apprehensive about the reloaded round. Many shooters still feel handloading is only for gun writers and gunsmiths. This is not the case. Any adult who has common sense can become a handloader.

It takes less equipment to get started than one might think. A good press capable of full length resizing, a powder measure and scale, case mouth chamfering

tool, vernier caliper, and the necessary reloading dies and components will suffice.

From that point on, it's a matter of adding equipment to suit the loader's individual needs. I know from personal experience that the reloading room will expand. Wildcatting (case swaging), lead bullet casting and jacketed bullet making add new dimensions to the reloading room.

Even though a chronograph is a sizable investment, it's a must for the handloader who is seeking perfection. It's next to impossible to know much about a reloaded round and its trajectory without establishing its muzzle velocity. Book figures may be close, but the actual readings from a particular rifle and load really tell the story.

Books in Brief . . .

(Order from publisher, not from Game Commission)

Hunting Trophy Whitetails, by David Morris, Venture Press, P.O. Box 1689, Bigfork, MT 59911, 483 pp., \$39.50, delivered. With many trophies to his credit, along with experience as a professional guide and wildlife manager, the author has a lot of sound advice to offer — not just those who want trophy whitetails, but anybody interested in enhancing his deer hunting. Natural history, judging bucks in the field, where in North America to find trophy whitetails and much more is offered here. It's obvious the author, a former editor of *North American Whitetail* magazine, knows his subject well. Every hunter, regardless of his experience and knowledge, will find this book useful and informative.

WATERFOWL: An identification guide to the ducks, geese and swans of the world, by Steve Madge and Hilary Burn, Houghton Mifflin, 215 Park Ave. South, NYC 10003, 298 pp., softbound, \$24.95. This identification guide covers all 155 species of ducks, geese and swans found in the world. Included are 48 color plates, showing every major plumage and subspecies variation, and 150 range maps. The text is authoritative and up-to-date. Like *Seabirds* and *Shorebirds*, the first two guides in this series, this is an outstanding, well-done reference.

Sixguns By Keith, by Elmer Keith, Wolfe Publishing Co., 6471 Airpark Dr., Prescott, AZ 86301, 336 pp., \$34.95. Originally published in 1955, this replica edition contains the opinions and experiences of one the most influential handgunners of all time. Keith grew up at a time when the West was still somewhat wild, and as a young man he knew first-hand many old cowboys and Indian fighters. Growing up and through his life he also worked as a cowboy, hunter and guide. And throughout his life he was also working with handguns. With all of his experience, he formed a lot of opinions, and he backed those up on the firing line and in the field. Not surprisingly, many of the day's gunmakers sought out Keith's advice and incorporated his ideas in the development of their guns and cartridges. Presented here are Keith's own ideas and experiences about handguns and handgun shooting.

In the wind

j. scott rupp



NASA satellites have shown that the ozone hole over Antarctica has reached record proportions; it is now three times as large as the United States. In addition, scientists say the thinning of the earth's protective shield began earlier last year and progressed more rapidly than in the past. The change can be traced to increasing levels of chlorofluorocarbons and to high levels of sulphur dioxides released in last year's major volcanic eruptions. The ozone hole has extended over a populated landmass for the first time in history.

The U.S. Army's Fort Polk, LA, installation is using a technology known as landfarming to decontaminate soils polluted by petroleum, oils and lubricants. Prompted by a change in Louisiana law that prohibited the disposal of contaminated soils in landfills, the Army developed an 8-acre landfarm. The process mixes waste with unfouled surface soil; harmful substances are broken down by naturally occurring microbes in the good soil.

There may be hope for the North American chestnut if a strategy developed by molecular biologists pans out. Two scientists were able to infect the fungus that causes chestnut blight with a less deadly virus, reports *Sports Afield*. The result may be that chestnuts would be infected with a less virulent disease, and simply form superficial cankers that would eventually heal.

The future of the heralded Wetland Reserve Program — part of the 1990 Farm Bill — is in doubt after Congress axed program monies for this year. In its pilot stage last year, the program received \$46.4 million to purchase perpetual and long-range wetland easements from farmers. Under WRP, the federal government would pay landowners 75 percent of the cost to restore wetland habitats on their properties. A sign-up period last year attracted nearly 3,000 landowners, and enrolled almost 50,000 acres in nine states.

Even as Arizona sportsmen celebrated the defeat of Proposition 200 (which could have banned hunting and fishing on the state's public lands) Colorado voters passed a referendum ending spring bear hunting and banning the use of bait and dogs for all bear hunting in the state. It passed by a 4 to 1 margin.

In what appears to be an interstate feud, Iowa's game commission banned Kansas hunters from participating in Iowa's deer seasons. Kansas does not permit nonresidents to hunt deer — except those who own more than 80 acres in the state. Iowa officials say Kansans who own land in Iowa may continue to hunt deer there.

Fund for Animals and other animal rights groups filed suit to stop the killing of sea gulls at John F. Kennedy airport, an action that was undertaken to prevent bird/plane collisions when other measures failed. Under a tentative agreement between New York and the plaintiffs, airport officials will have to conduct an environmental review before the killing of hazard-causing gulls can continue.

Answers: 1 — meadow vole or meadow mouse; 2 — muskrat; 3 — porcupine; 4 — snowshoe hare; 5 — gray squirrel; 6 — beaver

On the Trail of Pennsylvania's Black Bear

Two years in the making, based on the most exhaustive and comprehensive black bear research conducted in North America, *On the Trail of Pennsylvania's Black Bears* is a most entertaining and informative video production on Pennsylvania's premier big game animal. Hosted by Gary Alt and photographed by Game Commission videographer Hal Korber, this 100-minute video will appeal to all wildlife enthusiasts. It costs \$29.95, delivered. Order from the Game Commission, Department MS, 2001 Elmerton Ave., Harrisburg, PA 17110-9797.





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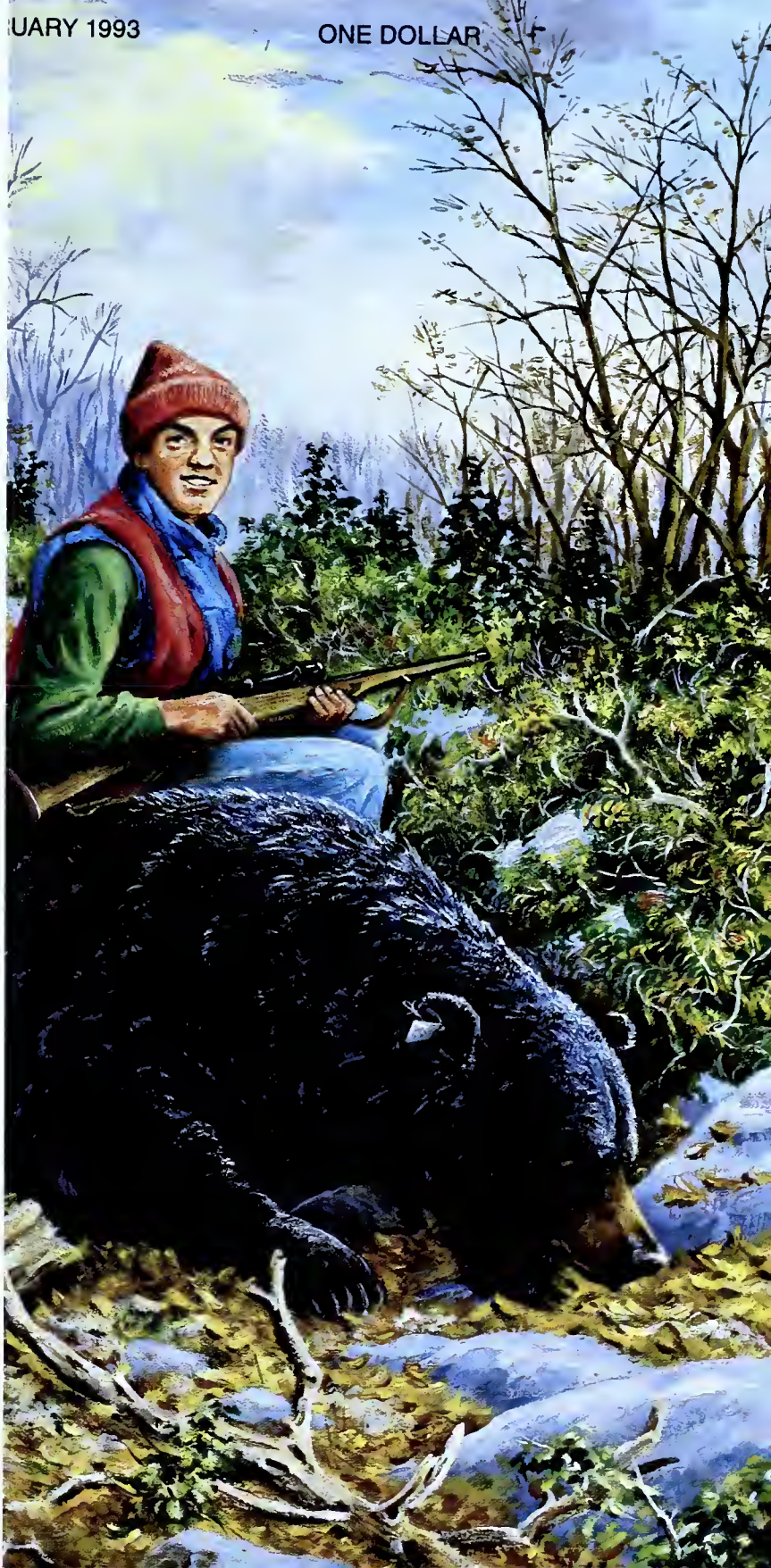
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PENNSYLVANIA GAME NEWS

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Working Together for Wildlife



- ◆ “Bear Run” by Bob Sopchick is the 11th limited edition fine art print for the Working Together for Wildlife program.

As with previous editions, “Bear Run” is limited to 600 signed and numbered prints on acid-free, 100 percent rag paper. Image size is about 15x22½ inches. The prints are \$125, delivered; framed prints cost \$97.50 more.

- ◆ Proceeds from WTFW sales benefit Pennsylvania’s nongame management and research projects. So far, the program has raised more than \$1 million and has helped bring eagles, ospreys, otters and other species back to our landscape.
 - ◆ Limited numbers of past prints are still available: kestrel ('86), elk ('87), egret ('88), white-tailed deer ('89), bald eagle ('90), red fox ('91) and ruffed grouse ('92).
- ◆ Don't forget to order a 1993 WTFW patch for only \$3. Last year's ruffed grouse patch sold out, so don't wait too long. Some patches from past years are still available, though. Ask for a complete list of sale items when placing your order.
- ◆ Order from the Pennsylvania Game Commission, Dept. M5, 2001 Elmerton Ave., Harrisburg, PA 17110-9797.



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PENNSYLVANIA GAME NEWS (ISSN 0031-451X) is published monthly for \$9 per year, \$25.50 for three years, or membership in Pennsylvania's Cooperative Farm-Game Project or Safety Zone Project; to Canada and all other foreign countries, \$10 U.S. currency, per year. Published by the Pennsylvania Game Commission, Harrisburg, PA. Phone (717) 787-4250. Second-class postage paid at Harrisburg, Pa. CHANGE OF ADDRESS: POSTMASTER: Send both old and new addresses to Pennsylvania Game News, 2001 Elmerton Ave., Harrisburg, PA 17110-9797. Allow six weeks for processing. Material accepted is subject to our requirements for editing and revising. Author payment covers all rights and title to accepted material, including manuscripts, photographs, drawings and illustrations. No information contained in this magazine may be used for advertising or commercial purposes. Opinions expressed here do not necessarily reflect those of the Pennsylvania Game Commission. Copyright © 1993 by the Pennsylvania Game Commission, an Equal Opportunity Employer, the programs of which are all administered consistent with the goals and objectives of Affirmative Action. All rights reserved.

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More Than Just Luck

FEATURED this month are the results of the Game Commission/Pennsylvania Outdoor Writers Association's 1992 Big Game Scoring Program, the 11th such session that's been conducted since 1965. Along with the new official records obtained through this program are the stories of how the top trophy in each of the five categories was taken.

Although luck plays an important part in every hunt, the accounts of these five hunts clearly illustrate how skill, perseverance and cooperation among fellow sportsmen are key ingredients, too.

First, just by bagging a gobbler in the spring and then a turkey, black bear and a buck in the fall, Chad Reed accomplished in a single year what most hunters can only dream of. And as if completing a Pennsylvania Grand Slam wasn't enough, Chad's bear, with a score of 22-11, garnered not only first place in the 1992 scoring program but also set a Pennsylvania record.

It wasn't as if Chad didn't have any competition, either. In just this recent scoring session, three bears measuring more than 22 inches were scored, while in all the other sessions combined only four trophies in that class had been measured. Because so many big bears have been measured in recent years, a minimum score of 19 inches has been established for record keeping purposes.

As for deer, determined to stick it out for one of two large bucks he knew was in the area, dedicated archer Paul Weisser, Jr., passed up several other bucks before finally dropping what turned out to be the 1992 program's largest nontypical whitetail. It measured 161-1 and currently ranks seventh in the state's all-time records.

Dan Van Houdt — who like Chad Reed has many hunting seasons ahead of him — spent three years studying, scouting and hunting for a big buck living near his Bucks County home. And when he finally dropped the deer with a slug, it turned out to be the scoring session's largest nontypical whitetail, at 189-0, and the 13th largest ever taken in the state.

Persistence also played a big part in Jeff McConeghy's hunt. Jeff was scouting public ground in Allegheny County prior to the 1991 archery season when he first spotted the big deer. As the season progressed, he saw the buck several times but never within shooting range. He, too, passed on other bucks, only to have the archery season end without him filling his tag. As luck would have it, the regular firearms season came and went, with no word of the trophy being taken. Determined to give his pursuit of the big buck his all, Jeff went back out in the second season with a friend and caught up with what turned out to be the third largest typical whitetail ever taken by an archer in Pennsylvania, measuring 161-3.

The largest typical whitetail measured in 1992 was taken by Bob Hoffman back in 1949. Driving 20 miles to a favored hunting spot each day, Bob was getting pretty discouraged as the season wore on. But thanks to his brother-in-law's urging, Bob caught up with his trophy late in the afternoon of the second Thursday. Modest and not interested in any notoriety, it was only because of Bob's nephew that the big deer rack was finally scored, a 174-6.

While in some respects the trophies featured in this month's issue represent the cream of the crop, any deer or bear — or any game animal — can be a trophy. The perception depends largely on the amount of effort and sacrifice a hunter puts into taking the animal. Nonetheless, as these results and stories show, Pennsylvania is home to some truly outstanding animals, freely available to anybody with the skill, patience, dedication and, yes, good luck it takes to get them. — *Bob Mitchell*



SICHUAN PHEASANTS will be released in three areas of the state, while the familiar ringneck will be released in three others. Researchers will monitor the success of these stockings in hopes of better understanding the factors affecting pheasants in Pennsylvania and, more importantly, possibly reestablishing the game birds here.

Pheasant Recovery Project

By Joe Kosack

PGC Information Specialist

AT ITS JANUARY meeting, the Game Commission tentatively approved the closure of six large areas to pheasant hunting for at least five years, a crucial part of a comprehensive research project that may ultimately lead to the restoration of the state's pheasant population. The project also features the state's first attempt to establish Sichuan pheasants here. The project's main goal is to determine whether a new pheasant — the Sichuan — or better habitat holds the key to pheasant recovery.

Each year, from 1993 through 1995, a minimum of 1,800 pheasants will be stocked

on six sites, each of which is at least 25,000 acres. Sichuans will be released on sites in Crawford, Juniata and Northumberland counties; ringnecks in Centre, Dauphin and Erie. It's hoped that population densities of 36 pheasants per square mile can be established on each site.

Population Trends

During the course of the study, radio-equipped birds will be monitored in order to determine habitat preferences, home range and survival rates. Spring crowing counts and flushing surveys will also be used to measure population trends.

Another facet of the study is to determine whether the game farm ringnecks are capable of establishing self-sustaining populations. In 1984, the agency's pheasant propagation procedures were redesigned to produce ringnecks more capable of surviving in the wild. Since then, however, based on upland game trend surveys, pheasant populations have not increased.

It's important to point out, though, that the birds raised under the new procedures have often been stocked in minimal numbers, haven't been afforded closed season protection and, in some cases, haven't been released in suitable habitat.

To give the birds every possible chance to become established, no pheasant hunting will be permitted on the core study areas and their buffer areas for at least five years. Biologists want to first evaluate how predators and the availability of food and habitat affect the birds. If and when each area's pheasant population becomes self-supporting and begins to expand into the buffer zone, hunting will be allowed, possibly with restrictions to control or limit hunting pressure. The study is expected to run until the summer of 2001.

1.3 Million to 300,000

Since Pennsylvania's ring-necked pheasant population peaked in the early 1970s, the annual harvest has declined from 1.3 million to 300,000 birds. Correspondingly, over just the past decade, the number of pheasant hunters has decreased from 770,000 to less than 300,000.

During the ringneck's heyday, wild pheasants numbered in the millions and accounted for a majority of the harvest. As the '70s progressed, however, the pheasant population declined, and today pheasant hunting is largely sustained by birds raised and stocked by the Game Commission.

Wildlife managers have long contended that habitat loss and land-use changes have caused the ringneck's plunge. In recent years, thousands of farmland acres have been lost to industrial complexes, shopping malls, suburban developments and urban sprawl. On areas still being farmed, smaller fields have been consolidated into bigger ones to accommodate

larger farm equipment, causing a loss of fencerows and other areas where pheasants once found food and shelter. Changing farming practices also include an increased use of pesticides and herbicides which kill off insects and weedy cover vital to pheasant survival.

Today, after harvesting, cornfields are barren ground; fencerows and windbreaks have vanished. Hay is mowed earlier and more frequently, giving hens little or no time to raise a brood.

Twenty-five years ago, for their first few weeks of life, pheasant chicks could find the food and cover they required without leaving the hay field where they had hatched. Today — if a hen is able to even hatch her brood before the hay is cut — she and her young must range farther to obtain adequate food and cover, greatly increasing their exposure to predators and other dangers.

If inadequate nesting and brood habitat is the major problem affecting ringnecks, then the Sichuan may be part of the answer. The Sichuan (also known as Straup pheasant) was brought to America in 1914 through arrangements between Michigan and the People's Republic of China. According to studies by Michigan's Department of Natural Resources, Sichuans have demonstrated high success by nesting and raising broods in brushy areas, not cultivated fields. If the Sichuan ultimately proves to be able to thrive in such habitat, it could be the key to rejuvenating pheasant populations here.

The Game Commission began experimenting with hybrid Sichuans in 1964 when 40 purebred Sichuan cocks were received from Michigan. They were bred with wild ringneck hens to produce ringneck/Sichuan hybrids. The offspring were released in western Mercer County and Franklin County's Letterkenny Army Depot.

Telemetry studies indicate the hybrids — like purebred Sichuans — prefer to nest outside active agricultural areas. Since 1989, however, when the last leases were made on these areas, the Letterkenny population has declined. Possibly because of better habitat, the Mercer

population has remained stable, at spring densities of approximately 12 birds per square mile.

The purebred Sichuans scheduled for release this coming fall will be offspring of 75 Sichuan hens and 25 cocks acquired from Michigan in December 1990. In exchange for those birds, the agency agreed to send Michigan 200 purebred Sichuan chicks each year for five years.

Somewhat smaller than ringnecks and bearing no white ring around their necks, Sichuans are more secretive, wary birds. They seem to be more aggressive and high-strung than ringnecks. At the pheasant farms, they require more space than ringneck chicks. Also, Sichuan males seem attentive to chicks, while ringneck cocks rarely display interest in broods.

Propagators believe the wariness exhibited by Sichuans can be attributed to their fairly recent wild ancestry — they're only five or six generations removed from the wild. Their behavior is much like ringnecks born and raised in the wild.

Despite some obvious differences, Sichuans and ringnecks are alike in many ways. Sichuan cocks crow less frequently but sound like ringnecks. Both birds prefer to escape danger by running and hiding; flying is a last resort. Sichuans, however, exhibit more of a tendency to squat and hide at the first sign of danger. Both species fly and run at about the same speeds.

It's not surprising Sichuans and ringnecks are so similar; they're members of the same species, *Phasianus colchicus*. Ringnecks, however, are a more diluted subspecies because they've been bred with many different strains over a long time.

In 1991, about 1,000 Sichuan chicks were produced at the Northcentral Game Farm. In 1992, with a breeding base augmented by 285 first-generation hens, chick production approached 6,000.

Last year, hunters had the chance to hunt 1,800 surplus Sichuans released on the Letterkenny Army Depot and on the three areas in Crawford, Juniata and Northumberland counties targeted for study

in the recovery project. This coming fall, pheasant hunting will be permitted in the western Mercer County study area, where 5,400 birds were released from 1987 to 1989.

Sichuans will not be released statewide until it's determined whether the birds can survive and if they pose any threat to wild ringnecks or other upland game bird populations.

The success of the pheasant recovery project depends on the cooperation of sportsmen and conservation-oriented groups. Manpower will be needed to post the study areas and buffer zones, assist with pheasant releases and conduct winter flushing counts.

Outdoorsmen will be encouraged to report illegal harvests. They can also assist with band recoveries and feeding habits studies by reporting and collecting any dead pheasants found in the study areas.

Furtakers tending traps within the areas will be asked to record and report their catches, and bird watchers may be asked to help monitor birds of prey in the study sites.

There are no illusions that this project represents a panacea to the problems facing pheasants in Pennsylvania. However, if restoration efforts are successful, we will have a cost-effective method for establishing populations on other areas where habitat quality remains above average. Information gained may also be useful for future habitat improvement programs, and we will also gain a better understanding of the survival and productivity of the game farm ringnecks.

Finally, considering that the Mercer study area now has 12 birds per square mile and that all six study sites have better habitat, higher pheasant populations should result on those six study areas, even if other program objectives are not met.

Whether or not pheasants can be reestablished in Pennsylvania remains to be seen, but through this ambitious project the Game Commission is fully evaluating the most promising options.



Triple Trophy

Not only did the author take one of the largest bears ever killed in Pennsylvania, his entire year was marked by a string of hunting successes.

REGARDLESS of what the rest of my hunting career might bring, it's difficult to imagine surpassing my accomplishments in 1991. It all began with the spring gobbler season.

The evening before the season began, my dad, Ken, and I located some turkeys going to roost. We arrived at our hunting location just before daybreak the next morning, and as we were walking in to our spot we spooked a turkey from its roost. When we arrived at our hunting location, a ridge midway up the mountain, I placed a turkey decoy about 30 yards from my position.

When two gobblers answered Dad's owl hooter, we knew we were in business. For 45 minutes we used our mouth calls to entice the gobblers into range. The first gobbler came up over the ridge and started running. It must have spotted me. Dad shot twice but didn't connect.

After the excitement subsided, we gathered our gear and headed across the mountain, stopping every hundred yards or so to call.

After about a half-hour of walking we heard another gobbler a couple hundred yards away. We quickly found a clearing in the laurel and placed the decoy about 20 yards in front of me. Dad went about 20 yards to the my left and began to call. Forty-five minutes later I spotted the gobbler coming in, full strut, right for the decoy.

With my 12-gauge Browning propped on my knee I placed the bead on its head and pulled the trigger. The bird weighed about 15 pounds and had a 5¼ inch beard.

Telling everyone about our exciting hunt made the time tick by fast, and before I knew it, it was time to hunt fall turkey.

Dad, my brother Ryan and I headed to our hunting camp in Bradford County. We were up early on the opening day, and headed for an area we felt certain held some birds. Walking out an old trail, we soon heard some clucking about 150 yards down in a valley. We quickly decided that Dad and Ryan would go in on the front side of the birds while I went in from the back side to break them up.

After about 10 minutes of walking, I located the birds. They were feeding in a field about 30 yards away. As I quickly walked toward them, they saw me and started flying in every direction. Dad and Ryan met me in the middle of the field, and from there we spread out and tried to call them back. After a couple of hours, though, it was obvious none of the birds was going to return.

Back at camp for lunch, we decided to hunt a grassy field on the back side of the ridge we'd tried that morning. Ryan had seen some birds run over the top of the ridge in that area, so we figured it was a good place to start. Once in the field, we all split up. Dad stayed in the open woods while Ryan and I headed for the field.

Once there, I hunted along the bottom of the valley to see if I could find some of the birds we had seen go over the ridge. After about an hour we all got back together, and as we were walking in some high grass, 15 turkeys took off only 10 yards in front of us. Although we were stunned and a little confused, we all managed to get a bird.

Then came bear season. This was the season I had been looking forward to for a long time. I'll never forget how we were sitting at camp, joking about how we were

By Chad Reed

going to get a big bear, and that I said, "Yeah, right." Little did I know what the next day would bring.

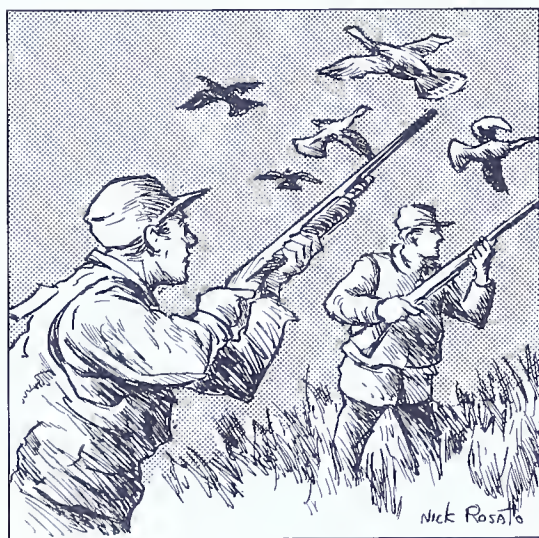
Opening day dawned cold and found us on Kellogg's Mountain. We left our vehicles at daybreak and started the 3-mile hike up the mountain. We soon split up and wished each other luck. I finally reached my spot, a rock ledge overlooking a clearcut. I sat there for six hours and saw only an 8-point — which I would have liked to get in buck season — and one doe.

Eventually I moved along the ridge to where Dad was. All he had seen were some doe. We ate lunch together and decided again to go our separate ways — arranging to meet back at the truck just before dark.

I started down a trail, concentrating on spots I thought a bear would like to be. Making my way through the laurel, I found a spot where I could see about 50 yards through the laurel. I sat for what seemed like an eternity, but it had only been an hour when I decided to backtrack to my first spot.

On the way, however, I got a feeling that I should turn around and continue along the rock ridge. I was only 20 yards from where I had just been sitting when I looked into the laurel. There it was, 30 yards away. It was just a big black spot, standing there, eating. I quickly dropped to my knee, leaned against a small tree, put the crosshairs on its neck and squeezed off a shot.

The bear went down but got right back



up. I quickly chambered another round and shot again. This time he dropped about 15 yards in front of me, but despite my first two shots he was still moving. A final shot through the chest ended it.

Standing there, shaking and totally amazed, it finally hit me. I just completed a hunter's dream of a lifetime. My dream anyway. I figured the bear weighed about 300 pounds. Knowing my dad was supposed to be about 200 yards away, I started yelling and running to find him. Running across the mountain, I came across two hunters who asked me what was wrong. "Nothing's wrong," I answered. "I just shot a bear — a big one."

They became as excited as I was and they helped me find Dad, who was calmly eating a sandwich. But when I yelled "Dad, I got one," the sandwich flew up in the air and Dad shot over the rock ledge as if he had rockets on his feet.

He immediately asked where it was and who was with it, obviously concerned somebody might take it. I assured him no one was taking this bear without an army.

Back with my bear, neither Dad nor the other hunters could believe their eyes. And we all wondered how are we were going to get the bear out of there. We started pulling with a tow rope one of the other hunters had, but we didn't budge it and the rope quickly tore. It was obvious we needed more help.

I took off across the mountain again to look for my brother Todd and anybody else I could find. I couldn't find him so I went back to the truck and found John and Scott. They took me for more help. When we finally got back to my bear we had 9 guys, a four-wheel-drive ATV and a four-wheel-drive truck.

There was a trail only 75 yards from the bear, but it still took us nearly four hours to get it out to the truck. To get it loaded, we made a ramp to the truck bed with some boards. Next we hooked a winch to the roller bar and attached the cable to the bear's

AFTER AN HOUR we got back together, and as we were walking through some high grass, about 15 turkeys flushed about 10 yards in front of us.

paws. With all the guys pushing, the winch pulling — and the roll bar bending — we finally managed to get the animal loaded.

From there we were on our way to the check station in Monroeton. News traveled fast because about a hundred people were waiting there to see my trophy weighed.

We had figured it weighed about 400 pounds, but when they put the 400- and then the 500-pound weights on the scale and it didn't move, my heart jumped into my throat. When the needle settled in at 604 pounds, I felt it was time to do some celebrating.

We arrived back home in Lititz around noon the next day, and from then until well into the evening, our house seemed like Grand Central Station.

People came from all around to take pictures and to look at the huge trophy, and I was even being interviewed by newspaper reporters. It was all so exciting. Without waiting too long, we then took the bear to a taxidermist and made arrangements to have a full mount made.

As the excitement subsided and deer season approached, I realized all I needed was a buck to complete a triple trophy. My

chance came the second day of the season. It was a cold clear morning and I was hunting in a small valley when I saw the deer coming along the top of the hill. I couldn't tell if it had antlers or not because its head was behind a tree. After what seemed like a century the deer stepped out and I saw right away he was fair game.

I rested my gun against the side of a tree, put the crosshairs on his shoulder and squeezed the trigger. The deer went right down.

Not only did I complete my triple trophy, but because my buck, a 5-point, was the biggest one taken in our camp, I also won the buck pool.

Thinking nothing else could possibly happen to make my 1991 season any more memorable, I was shocked to learn that my bear, with a measurement of 22-11, was

not only the largest scored during the state's big game scoring program, but the largest Pennsylvania black bear trophy on record.

Reflecting back over my 1991 season, I realized I experienced many good times and have many memories I will never forget. I just wish I could adequately thank everyone connected with all my hunting success.



WHEN THE BUCK stepped from behind the tree I knew he was fair game. I rested my gun against a tree and squeezed the trigger.

Black Bear

Rank/Name	Hometown	County Taken	Year Taken	Score
1 Reed, Chad	Lititz	Bradford	1991	22-11
2 Legotti, Joseph	Jim Thorpe	Carbon	1991	22-9
2 Rottman, Frank A.	Karns City	Jefferson	1991	22-9
4 Lopo, Joe	Hazleton	Carbon	1987	21-14
4 Robbins, Adrian	Frackville	Luzerne	1989	21-14
6 Kneller, Charles	Hellertown	Monroe	1991	21-11
7 Kupniewski, Walter	Tidioute	Warren	1989	21-9
7 Naholnik, Mike	Norristown	Lackawanna	1991	21-9
9 Mosley, John	Wilkes-Barre	Luzerne	1990	21-8
10 Gaines, Frederick M.	Frenchville	Clearfield	1990	21-7
10 Mathews, William B.	Donegal	Westmoreland	1991	21-7

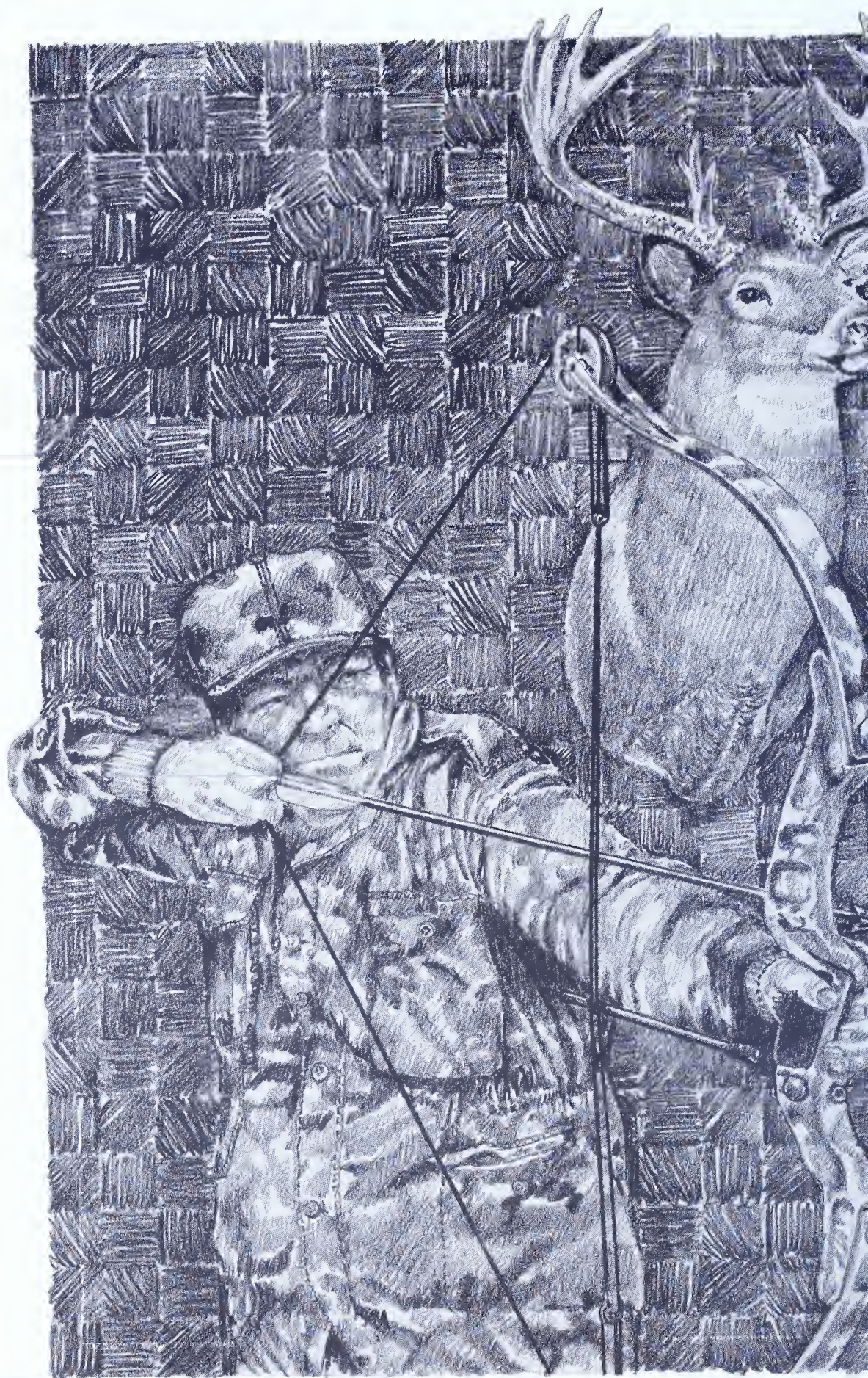
<u>Rank/Name</u>	<u>Hometown</u>	<u>County Taken</u>	<u>Year Taken</u>	<u>Score</u>
12 Sellers, Gary	Warriors Mark	Potter	1989	21-5
12 Henegan, Joseph H.	Jamestown	Warren	1990	21-5
14 Bell, Gregory B.	Mahaffey	Clearfield	1989	21-4
15 Tantlinger, Clyde	New Florence	Westmoreland	1989	21-3
15 Allegretto, Thomas J.	Drums	Luzerne	1990	21-3
15 Ames, William D.	Brookville	Jefferson	1991	21-3
18 Laurie, Mike	Drums	Bradford	1991	20-15
19 McMullen, Daniel F.	Ashville	Cambria	1989	20-14
19 Kachik, Joseph D.	Cambridge Spgs.	Forest	1990	20-14
19 Beach, Monte	Curryville	Centre	1991	20-14
19 Osias, Alfred Paul	Hawley	Pike	1991	20-14
23 Clutter, William E.	Irvona	Clearfield	1991	20-13
23 Engvaldsen, Thomas	Hawley	Pike	1991	20-13
25 Cross, Culark A.	Somerset	Somerset	1989	20-12
25 Eythe, Don	Bruin	Jefferson	1990	20-12
25 Carden, Joe A.	Avoca	Luzerne	1991	20-12
25 Eiler, Tom	Petrolia	Butler	1991	20-12
25 Gaston, Tracy	Rochester Mills	Elk	1991	20-12
25 Gilliland, Karen K.	Warriors Mark	Huntingdon	1991	20-12
25 Pascucci, Dave	Wilkes-Barre	Luzerne	1991	20-12
32 Whitsett, Edward	Whitehall	Monroe	1991	20-11
33 Aaron, Mark K.	Brookville	Jefferson	1989	20-10
33 Emigh, George F.	Penn Run	Indiana	1989	20-10
33 Homan, S	Pa. Furnace	Centre	1989	20-10
33 Rearick, Ivan T. Jr.	Shelocta	Potter	1989	20-10
37 Beckman, Ronald C.	Blairsville	Tioga	1989	20-9
37 Mele, James M.	Pittsburgh	Warren	1990	20-9
37 Miszler, Kenneth	Hawley	Wayne	1991	20-9
40 Englehart, Barbara	Myerstown	Potter	1989	20-8
40 Lewis, Erik	Dayton	Armstrong	1989	20-8
40 Caldera, Mike	Montoursville	Lycoming	1990	20-8
43 Rinker, John D.	East Stroudsburg	Monroe	1986	20-7
43 Anderson, Ronald Jr.	Export	McKean	1989	20-7
45 Miller, Ronald B.	Tyrone	Blair	1990	20-6
46 Dippold, John W. Jr.	St. Marys	Elk	1989	20-5
46 Dolan, Edward	Lock Haven	Clinton	1989	20-5
46 Vinca, Eugene A.	Corry	McKean	1989	20-5
46 Majerich, James	New Ringgold	Schuylkill	1990	20-5
46 Weyant, David	Carlisle	Blair	1990	20-5
46 Whipkey, John D.	Boswell	Somerset	1991	20-5
52 Maus, Edward	Nanty Glo	Cambria	1989	20-4
53 Hostetler, Todde	Quahecreek	Somerset	1988	20-3
53 Weller, Mike E.	Transfer	Warren	1989	20-3
53 Noble, Terry L.	Millerton	Tioga	1991	20-3
56 Renfer, Ron	Suscon	Luzerne	1985	20-2
56 Kramaric, Andy	Wallingford	Luzerne	1989	20-2
56 Krause, Richard L.	Schuylkill Haven	Lycoming	1989	20-2
56 Lamoreaux, Robert	Chesterland, OH	Forest	1989	20-2
56 Antal, Chris	Suscon	Luzerne	1990	20-2
56 Speranza, Philip	Dover	Indiana	1990	20-2
56 Collins, Anthony	Royersford	Centre	1991	20-2
56 Steward, Loren	Bloomsburg	Sullivan	1991	20-2
64 Kolesar, George J.	Jerome	Cameron	1979	20-1
64 Grove, Nathan	Hanover	Union	1989	20-1
64 Miller, David T.	Tylersville	Clinton	1989	20-1
64 Sensenig, Daryel	New Holland	Centre	1989	20-1
64 Vough, Carl	Dushore	Sullivan	1990	20-1
69 Hensler, Rick	Jersey Shore	Lycoming	1989	20-0
70 Campbell, Ronald	Boswell	Cambria	1989	19-15
70 Harkleroad, Lloyd	Rural Valley	Armstrong	1989	19-15

<u>Rank/Name</u>	<u>Hometown</u>	<u>County Taken</u>	<u>Year Taken</u>	<u>Score</u>
70 Osborn, Robert	Windber	Bedford	1990	19-15
70 Luzier, Joseph C. Jr.	Karthus	Clearfield	1991	19-15
74 Cooper, Gary	Glenshaw	Forest	1979	19-14
74 Lehman, Gerald	Elizabethtown	Potter	1983	19-14
74 Gearhart, Larry	Hunlock Creek	Wyoming	1989	19-14
74 Faust, Scott	Greensburg	Cameron	1991	19-14
78 Berkheimer, Fred	Thomasville	Cameron	1987	19-13
78 Hunt, Jim	Bradenville	Somerset	1989	19-13
78 Vosler, Gail W.	Greenville	Forest	1989	19-13
78 Wallace, Edward	Ashland	Clinton	1989	19-13
78 Schatz, Kim D.	Bainbridge	Clearfield	1991	19-13
83 Boyer, Edward	Oley	Tioga	1989	19-12
83 Meck, Roy W.	Bath	Pike	1989	19-12
83 Rohrbach, Robin	Fleetwood	Pike	1989	19-12
83 Lorson, Richard	Berlin	Somerset	1991	19-12
83 Nixon, Homer L. Jr.	Carnegie	Potter	1991	19-12
83 Slimick, Ed	Gibsonia	McKean	1991	19-12
89 Hegarty, John Jr.	Harrisburg	Clearfield	1980	19-11
89 Alderfer, Randall	Mt. Pleasant Mills	Snyder	1982	19-11
89 Hamershock, Bernard	Harrisburg	Pike	1989	19-11
92 Cobb, Benjamin A.	New Milford	Susquehanna	1986	19-10
92 Hagmaier, Wm C.	Pittsburgh	Forest	1989	19-10
92 McKee, Shawn		Centre	1989	19-10
*Villa, Giovanni	Baldwin, MD			
92 Snyder, Howard E.	Hamburg	Lycoming	1991	19-10
96 Hanlon, John	Ashville	Cambria	1984	19-9
97 Joe, Louis A.	New Derry	Somerset	1989	19-8
98 Swartzbaugh, E.E.	Dover	Potter	1989	19-7
99 Dembowski, Raymond	Pittsburgh	Forest	1989	19-6
99 Speer, David H.	Blairs Mills	Huntingdon	1989	19-6
101 Hoke, Keith O.	Dover	Cameron	1988	19-5
101 Antrim, Darlene L.	Bechtelsville	Tioga	1990	19-5
101 Johnson, Max	Grove City	McKean	1990	19-5
101 Burt, Michael	Titusville	Crawford	1991	19-5
105 Stake, Clair D.	Three Springs	Huntingdon	1988	19-4
105 Allison, Jeff	Williamsburg	Blair	1989	19-4
107 Davis, Terry A.	Marysville	Clearfield	1989	19-3
107 Gummo, John	Tyrone	Centre	1991	19-3
109 Satko, James A.	Cheltenham	Pike	1986	19-2
109 Davis, Michael	Renovo	Clinton	1987	19-2
109 Malesky, Chester Jr.	Curtisville	Clarion	1989	19-2
109 Snook, Wayne	McClure	Mifflin	1991	19-2
113 Krause, Craig R.	Pine Grove	Lycoming	1991	19-1
114 Wirick, Wayne	Windber	Tioga	1989	19-0
114 Hake, Nathan	York	Mifflin	1990	19-0

Black Bear Pickups

1 Saurman, Robert	Exton	Centre	1989	21-6
2 Souders, Frederick A.	Mechanicsburg	Jefferson	1988	21-2
3 Phillips, James L.	Lakewood	Wayne	1991	20-2

* denotes owner



Familiarity Breeds Success

Paul Weiser, Jr., had hunted the area around his home just about forever, and that helped him bag his 15-point nontypical trophy.

"PAUL, YOU DID IT, you did it," shouted Tony as he hugged and pounded his friend on the back.

"It," was arrowing the sixth place all-time nontypical archery whitetail, and top nontypical archery whitetail at the 1992 Big Game Awards Program held in conjunction with the Pennsylvania Outdoor Writer's Association's fall conference in Carlisle on Sept. 19, 1992.

Paul Weiser, Jr., shot his magnificent 15-point near his home in Numidia, Columbia County, on Saturday Oct. 21, 1989, a day Weiser says, "I'll never forget." The huge buck dressed out at 191 pounds and had a 21-inch spread, which is symmetrical except for the brow tines, which are unusual. Pennsylvania Game Commission measurers scored Weiser's buck at 161 $\frac{1}{8}$.

A longtime archer, Weiser was hunting a ridge overlooking a cornfield near his home. His longtime hunting companion, Tony Lentini, was hunting nearby and their expectations were high. The old saying about familiarity breeding contempt couldn't be more wrong for these experienced hunters. To them, familiarity means success.

Weiser started hunting the area 36 years ago, as a 12-year-old. He accompanied his dad, and at that time carried a firearm. While he occasionally uses firearms, archery is his forte.

As a returning veteran from Vietnam, Weiser had his fill of firearms. He wanted to return to the woods of his youth, but a firearm would no longer be his companion.

Instead he took up archery, and in 1969 took a 175-pound buck that scored 115 $\frac{3}{8}$.

Weiser's familiarity with his hunting area extends to most of the area's residents, a major contributing factor to bagging his record buck. In late summer of '89 Weiser ran into an excavator working in the area and was informed of a big buck, carrying 15 points on its huge rack. Weiser again received word of the monster buck, two weeks prior to the season, through a farmer and his hired hand.

"I like big deer," says Weiser, "so the knowledge that something special was around really whet my appetite." Just before the season Weiser and a friend spotted two large

buck. They were unable to count points on either deer, but they felt that one of the two was the big one Weiser had been hearing about.

The scenario was set; the drama about to unfold.

Out opening day, Weiser spotted a big buck just before full light. "I think it was the one," Weiser shrugged. "But it was just too dark to be sure."

Passing on that one, Weiser saw six or seven good buck during the day, including a 12-pointer an acquaintance shot later, during the firearm season.

At one point during the day, about 100 yards from the spot where he eventually bagged his trophy, Weiser saw a number of deer "staging," trying to decide which direction to travel. Unable to approach them, he filed the information away for future reference.

By John W. McGonigle

A dedicated single parent, Weisser was unable to hunt during the week. Work and 9-year-old Paul III kept him busy.

The second Saturday was uneventful. The wind was coming from the wrong direction, so Weisser avoided his preferred hunting area, not wanting to disturb established travel patterns.

The third Saturday seemed no different than the others. He and Tony Lentini were in the woods and set up well before daylight. With his climbing stand anchored in an oak tree 18 feet off the ground, Weisser was ready and admittedly confident. His stand was about three quarters of the way up a wooded ridge, about 150 yards from the top.

At daylight Wiesser spotted what appeared to be a deer. "I thought it was a deer," Weisser said, "but sometimes daylight plays tricks on you and I wasn't sure." Returning his gaze after looking away, Weisser knew for sure what he had seen was certainly a deer because now it was gone.

Ever watchful, Weisser's peripheral vision caught movement. Then, ever so slowly, he turned to his left and gawked at the giant buck just 35 yards distant, with horns "sticking out all over."

Now parallel with Weisser on the ridge, the buck offered a perfect broadside shot as he scanned the hillside above him before proceeding up the trail.

With the buck unaware of his presence, Weisser, completely calm, loosed an arrow for the 20-yard shot that penetrated the deer's left shoulder. It was later found that the 160-grain Thunderhead broadhead, carried on a 28½-inch No. 2315 XX75

arrow, stopped just shy of the skin covering the big buck's far shoulder.

Weisser's shooting style is a bit hard to describe. While he uses a PSE Laser Magnum compound set at 83 pounds, he uses no sights and no release. "I guess I'm a traditional shooter using non-traditional equipment," Weisser said with a grin.

"After the shot I got nervous," Weisser admitted, "especially since I really thought it was *the* deer."

Crashing down the hill, the deer sounded "like an elephant."

"I decided not to push this one, because I wasn't completely sure of the hit," he related.

In addition to not wanting to push the deer too soon, Weisser was also concerned about spoiling Lentini's chances.

Lentini was nearby and, as yet, did not have a deer as far as Weisser knew. As it turned out, Lentini did not score that day, though a nice 8-point passed directly under Weisser's tree as he waited.

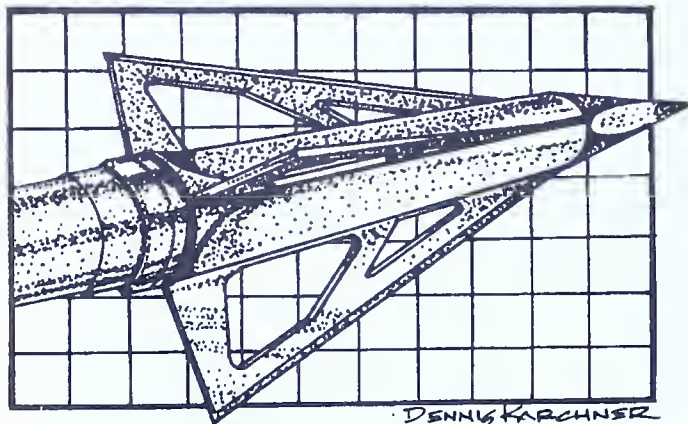
Descending from the tree after nearly an hour, Weisser was confident his trophy would be just over the rise. Disappointed after a quick look, Weisser immediately went back to where the deer had been hit. Elation took over as he quickly found blood and followed it a short 75 yards down the hill to where the big buck lay "down and dead," as Weisser put it.

"You really think of dumb things," Weisser said, elated all over again. "I wanted to field-dress it immediately so it wouldn't get away," he added sheepishly.

The trophy was his, and all the chores were completed by the time Lentini joined Weisser, which is where we started this tale.

"We just sat and just stared at the deer for 15 minutes," Weisser said. "We were unable to speak after the initial burst of exhilaration."

While Lentini carried the equipment, Weisser dragged the trophy



DENNIS KARCHNER

WEISSER'S SHOT was true and the broadhead did its job, penetrating through the shoulder and stopping just shy of the skin on the far side. The buck ran only 75 yards.

to the bottom of the hill. "I was really pumped," he said, a pretty big understatement considering he dragged it one-handed the whole way.

A short wait for a friend's truck was just

enough time for Weisser to savor his achievement. He had taken a record buck, he was on familiar land, and he had a good friend to help share his elation — all the ingredients of a perfect hunt.

Archery Deer — Nontypical

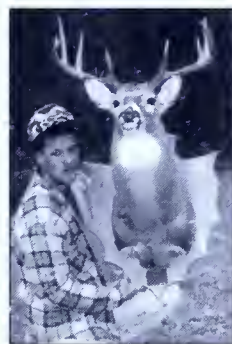
Rank/Name	Hometown	County Taken	Year Taken	Score
1 Weisser, Paul Jr.	Numidia	Columbia	1989	161-1
2 Griffith, Thomas E.	Apollo	Westmoreland	1990	143-2
3 Penn, David	Natrona Heights	Butler	1990	139-4



Leonard Falco
142-7



Adrian Robbins (right)
21-14



Kevin Barber
139-3



Gregory Sarvey
155-2



Charles Kneller
21-11



Tom Griffith
143-2



Mike Vetovich
153-0



Dominick Barbetta
130-5



Gary Sellers
21-5



Don Hazelton
140-2



Not Your Typical Buck

The Southeast special regs area yielded the top nontypical buck taken with a firearm. Dan Van Houdt watched it for several years before he finally got his chance

AS THE OPENING HOUR of deer season arrived, Dan Van Houdt found himself sitting in a small mountain ravine in Susquehanna County. With his dad close by, the 13-year-old waited with visions of a big buck on his mind.

The .30-30 felt good in the teenager's hands. Thinking back to his hunter-ed course, Dan was hoping to remember all he had been taught, plus all the instructions his dad had given him. He felt he was up to the task at hand.

A lot of hunters go years without even seeing a buck during the season, let alone getting one their first year. From scouting around, Dan and his dad knew they were in a good location to up the odds of success.

As Dan sat, a 7-pointer slipped within range of his lever-action. With one shot, the lad had his first buck. Perhaps it had been too easy.

The following season found Dan and his dad back in the same area. A veteran now, Dan had high hopes of repeating his deer hunting performance from the year before.

The hunting was a lot tougher than Dan had figured. In fact, when a spike offered him a quick shot, he missed. Although disappointed, he decided to try harder the following year. Maybe this humbling experience would make him a little more careful.

As winter slowly passed, then spring turned into summer, Dan eagerly began looking forward to the annual pilgrimage to Susquehanna County.

He could hardly believe his ears, however, when his dad said they couldn't make

the trip. The 1989 season would not be the same.

Dan had mixed emotions as he pondered his situation. He had been anxious to get away to the mountains, but he was upbeat about the prospects of hunting near home.

While bowhunting on a neighboring farm, he had encountered several large buck. Although unable to take a shot at any, he mentally

noted them for future reference. Maybe he would see one this buck season. One buck was particularly memorable. The first time Dan saw the deer he named it Henry. "The rack was huge," he said. "We usually spotted it at the last half hour of light."

Henry's buck rubs and other telltale signs could be seen within an easy 10-minute walk from Dan's house. He knew other hunters might not have seen this one yet, so Dan and his dad decided not to tell anyone else about him.

When buck season arrived, Dan was more excited than he had ever been before. As light slowly began making objects around him more visible, Dan diligently searched for deer.

Distant shots heightened Dan's expectations. But he didn't see anything. The hour was early. There was plenty of time, he reminded himself.

Two shots rang out around 7:30, close enough to snap Dan to attention. On full alert, the young hunter saw the buck clearly coming right to him. It wasn't the big one, but it was good enough. The decision was made and Dan's season was over with a well-placed shot. With a handsome 8-

By Carl W. McCardell

point in hand, thoughts of other deer vanished.

Dan continued to watch the buck he called Henry. The rack got larger each year. Other hunters, too, were now aware of the big buck.

Henry was the topic of conversation for many people in the area. Thinking somebody might try to take him before the season, even the local WCO kept watch on occasion.

Dan did not get a deer in 1990. In the archery season, though, he saw the big buck several times. Surprisingly, no one in Bucks County was able to get the wary buck, even in the regular antlered season.

The Special Regulations Area has been in existence since the late 1960s. The boundary lines cut across various parts of Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Montgomery and Philadelphia counties. In 1991, the area was expanded to include entire counties, including Bucks.

As the deer season approached, Dan and his dad again decided to remain at home. Neither of them wanted to go to the mountains with the big buck still hanging around. Someone might take the deer this season or it might get hit by a car. This would have to be the year.

The big day finally arrived — and with it came heavy rains. Would the weather change the big buck's habits? He had been making scrapes near Dan's stand in the bow season.



Dan had seen Henry at least a dozen times while he had a bow in hand. "He even bedded down right next to the tree where I had my stand," Dan said. "I tried going there at different times in the day. I chased him when I was going to the stand. I wouldn't see him the rest of the day."

With thoughts of the big buck on his mind, Dan climbed into his stand well before shooting time. He hadn't heard the big buck crashing away in the dark, and he considered that a good sign.

The rain was still coming down when Dan spotted a buck. Was it the one he had been searching for? Dan quickly realized that he better take a shot at this handsome buck instead of waiting. Maybe his dad would be in range of the big one.

Dan had practiced with his slug gun now a necessity due to the extension of the special regulations area, but somehow missed the shot. The deer had been moving rapidly. Perhaps Dan had not led the animal enough.

He carefully fed another Federal sabot slug into the chamber and checked for signs of a hit. A thorough search yielded nothing.

Dan saw several does throughout the day. In the Southeast Special Regulation Area, hunters can take doe during the antlered deer season, but Dan and his dad chose not to purchase antlerless tags.

Dan went home for lunch with mixed thoughts. He would have really been glad to take what he believed was an 8-pointer, the one he had just missed. On the other hand, there was the possibility the big buck was still around.

A neighbor had recently found one of the buck's sheds from the year before. He had been jogging when he spotted the single antler in a road ditch. Dan remembered the nontypical points protruding in different directions.

After lunch, Dan was ready to try his hand again at hunting. He decided to head back to his favorite spot.

WHEN A GOOD 8-pointer raced by his stand, Dan missed. A careful investigation showed it'd been a clean miss. Then the young hunter went for lunch.

A NEIGHBOR had recently found one of the buck's sheds, and Dan remembered the impressive antler.

When the young hunter hadn't seen any fresh deer sign, he decided to check out the area where he had shot at the 8-pointer. Sneaking slowly, Dan crossed a small creek bordering a marshy area.

Dan squinted into the brush at an object he could not clearly identify. To his surprise, it was a bedded buck. The animal stood at 30 yards. It was the big one, no doubt about it.

This time Dan shouldered his Ithaca Deer Slayer and fired when the iron sights aligned on the animal's chest. The slug dropped the deer in its tracks.

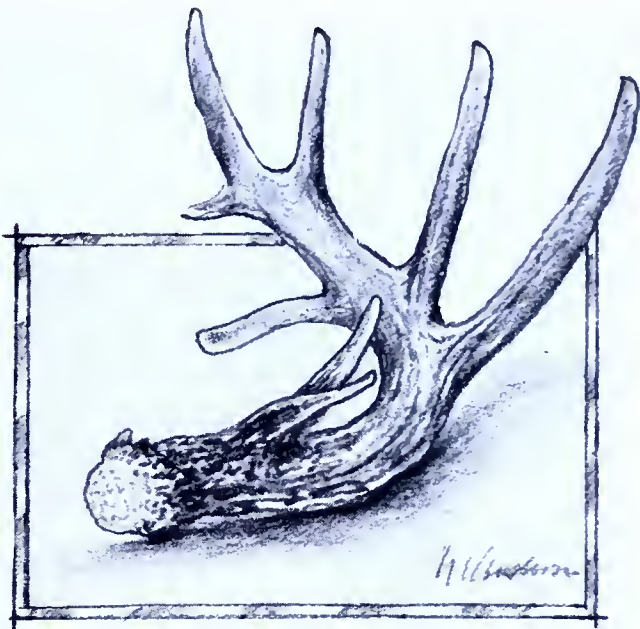
The massive rack seemed to stick up everywhere. Dan could hardly believe he was standing over the deer he had watched for so long.

It took him and his dad more than 45 minutes to drag the deer back to the house, a trip that normally takes about five.

As they butchered the deer that evening, they couldn't get over how large the rack was, especially around the bases. This one would have to be a record, they thought.

When the usual conversation at school that week centered around the buck season, Dan proudly announced that he had gotten his buck. Some fellow students had also connected, but when size was discussed most of his friends did not believe Dan's deer could possibly be as big as he claimed.

But after a couple of Dan's friends saw the huge antlers, the word quickly spread,



and everyone wanted to know the details.

An acquaintance of Dan's scored the set of antlers, and although the rack had not dried the required amount of time, Dan still knew he had a record book rack.

Later, when Dan's rack was officially measured at the Game Commission's 1992 scoring program, it scored a 189 in the nontypical category. With a 23-inch spread, even the officials were impressed. Dan's buck placed 13th on the all-time list.

In the future, Dan would like to attend a business school in order to become an accountant or go into sales. He hopes to someday take a brown bear with a bow.

But for now, as he whispered in Executive Director Pete Duncan's ear while being presented the Game Commission's recognition award for his trophy buck, "I know where there's a 14-pointer I'm going to try to get this year."

Firearms Deer — Nontypical

Rank/Name	Hometown	County Taken	Year Taken	Score
1 Van Houdt, Daniel	Quakertown	Bucks	1991	189-0
2 Sheatz, Chris	Knox	Clarion	1991	181-1
3 Frey, Ronald	Stevens	Chester	1988	179-2
4 Wentzel, David	Mertztown	Berks	1991	175-0
5 Curran, William F.	Mars	Butler	1989	173-1
6 Dillow, Russell	Coatesville	Chester	1990	173-0
7 Werner, James E.	Rochester	Beaver	1988	170-2
8 Henry, Bill V.	Blairsville	Indiana	1990	164-5
9 Martz, Lee	Ringgold	Jefferson	1967	164-1
10 Tonnesen, Keith	Green Lane	Montgomery	1991	161-1
11 Scott, James J.	Hermitage	Mercer	1981	160-3

Big Thicket Buck of Horseshoe Hill

Jeff McConeghy had his heart set on taking the 10-pointer with a bow, and his perserverance finally paid off in the late season.

By Tom Tatum

WHEN IT COMES TO BOWHUNTING, old-timers will tell you there are two ways to bag a trophy whitetail. One is by dumb luck. The other is with a lot of plain old hard work.

At age 27, Jeff McConeghy can hardly be classified as an old timer, but he's living proof that hard work, coupled with a ton of patience, long hours, and, okay . . . maybe just a pinch of luck, can result in the trophy of a lifetime.

McConeghy, a resident of Clairton, first spotted the remarkable 10-pointer while scouting some public hunting grounds in Allegheny County. Continued preseason scouting indicated to McConeghy that the favorite haunt of the big deer was a hill shaped like a horseshoe. Perhaps this was a good omen. After all, horseshoes are lucky, aren't they? Every time he saw the deer it seemed even more impressive. It didn't take long for McConeghy to realize that as far as the upcoming hunting season was concerned, no other buck would do.

When Pennsylvania's 1991 archery season finally rolled around, Jeff took to the woods with his Bear Whitetail I compound. And while the draw weight of his bow was set at 60 pounds, his determination to arrow the awesome 10-point was immeasurable.

In 12 years of hunting, McConeghy had taken only one buck — an average 8-point — with a rifled slug. A bowhunter for 10 years, he had two does to his credit with stick and string.

But this year, he promised himself, would be different. And as the season progressed, McConeghy would have his share of close encounters with the dream buck — but always out of bow range. Half a dozen times he glimpsed the awesome 10-pointer, but he could never get a shot.

Other chances presented themselves as the season wore on. McConeghy was offered easy shots at three other bucks, two of them 6-pointers. He resisted temptation and declined the shots. His mind, as always, was set on the big 10-point.

And then the season ended.

Committed to taking the buck with a bow, McConeghy crossed his fingers, clenched his teeth, and hoped the buck

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would somehow survive the upcoming fire-arms season. It did. And when the late archery season finally arrived, after Christmas, McConeghy was ready to resume his quest.

As had become his custom, he took a week's vacation to hunt the second season. Jeff is an unusual archer in that he seldom uses a tree stand. He prefers to use a ground blind or to employ still-hunting and stalking techniques to get close to game animals. It may be that his unconventional approach contributed to his ultimate success.

The day after Christmas, the first morning of the second season, McConeghy passed up a small buck. About an hour before noon of the next day, Dec. 27, he again glimpsed the monster 10-point, but a hundred yards away. An archery shot, needless to say, was out of the question.

It would be the following day that McConeghy would write himself into the state's bowhunting history books. That morning, around eight o'clock, while walking to his stand, Jeff bumped the big buck and a doe out of their beds. This time McConeghy leaned back and studied the buck's escape route. The buck took off over

the crest of a hill. "The place he always goes," McConeghy would recall, "a hill shaped like a horseshoe with a thicker where he hangs out."

This time, instead of hurrying after the fleeing buck, as he'd done before with no success, Jeff decided to wait him out. "I knew where he was, so I gave him time to settle down."

Three hours later, Jeff and his hunting buddy Terry Newmeyer, also of Clairton, held a rendezvous to plan their strategy. The terrain the two were hunting was hilly, but not really mountainous. The buck was hiding out in what McConeghy describes as "a thicket of berry bushes, jaggers and all kinds of weeds. It's so thick it's impossible for a man to walk through," which explains how this particular buck got so big."

After planning their strategy, Terry and Jeff set up for an ambush near the thicket where they thought the buck would emerge. The first few times Jeff had tracked the buck to the thicket, he had set up where the buck had entered the brush — and he had come up empty each time.

But this time would be different. McConeghy realized the buck had to be exiting from the opposite side of the thicket — an impenetrable patch about 200 yards long and 150 yards wide.

All told, there were four trails leading into the thicket, three leading out. The two archers positioned themselves so that all three exit trails were covered. The arrangement would give Jeff an uphill shot, Terry a downhill shot. It was agreed to let Terry have the first shot. "After all," Jeff said, "he's the one who taught me to bowhunt."

The strategy proved correct, because after only half an hour or so, the big buck came out on the middle trail. Terry, hiding in a ground blind, had a clear broadside shot at just under 20 yards. Dazzled by the buck's huge rack, Terry shot high over the deer's back.

Jeff saw Terry miss, then drew his own



AS WAS HIS CUSTOM, McConeghy took a week's vacation from work to hunt the beginning of the late archery season.

bow. By now the buck was trotting away from Terry toward Jeff. When the buck suddenly stopped in a small clearing, McConeghy was ready. Standing a mere 20 yards downhill from the buck, he released his arrow.

Jeff's aim was true; the Easton Gamegetter II hit high on the buck's right shoulder, sending the 120-grain, three-bladed Satellite broadhead through both lungs. The buck disappeared over a small rise.

After waiting a half-hour, the two archers began the task of trailing the animal. They didn't go far. The buck had collapsed just out of sight on the far side of the knoll. It had traveled only 25 yards after being hit.

"Coming over that knoll, all we saw was rack," McConeghy said. By then it was almost noon. Jeff had shot the buck at 11:20. The chilly December morning had

warmed to 35 degrees. The sky was clear and sunny, but the glow couldn't match the one on the faces of the happy bowhunters.

With the help of Terry's brother Jay, the three managed to drag the deer to their pickup. The buck's estimated live weight was 210 pounds.

McConeghy's 10-point proved to be the biggest typical whitetail taken in Pennsylvania by a bowhunter in 1991. What's more, its Pope and Young score of 161³/₈ would place it third in Pennsylvania's all-time record list.

You'd think that the Horseshoe Hill buck would be the trophy of a lifetime for any archer. McConeghy would probably agree, but he's not about to rest on his laurels.

"The buck I saw while scouting the other night," he'll tell you, "might just be a little bit bigger."

Archery Deer — Typical

Rank/Name	Hometown	County Taken	Year Taken	Score
1 McConeghy, Jeff	Clairton	Allegheny	1991	161-3
2 Sarvey, Gregory	Alliquippa	Beaver	1990	155-2
3 Metzger, Steve	Germansville	Lehigh	1989	151-4
4 McGinnis, Matthew	Lewisburg	Lycoming	1991	151-1
5 Raeburn, Stephen D.	Morehead City, NC	Chester	1991	149-4
6 Flaxenburg, Seth	Elverson	Chester	1991	148-3
7 Boyle, Kenneth	Benton	Columbia	1991	147-5
8 Poper, Ted	Oley	Delaware	1991	147-4
9 Caspersen, Randy R.	Exton	Chester	1988	145-4
10 Magiera, David W.	Graceton	Indiana	1990	143-4
11 Falco, Leonard J.	Collegeville	Bucks	1990	142-7
12 Zoller, Paul W.	Library	Allegheny	1991	142-3
13 Barberich, Michael	Gibsonia	Allegheny	1991	141-7
14 Stoltenberg, R. Jr.	Butler	Butler	1990	140-6
15 Hazelton, Don	Wellsboro	Tioga	1990	140-2
16 Kist, Kevin E.	Pittsburgh	Allegheny	1987	139-6
17 Barber, Kevin	Edenburg	Lawrence	1990	139-3
18 Cook, David	Bensalem	Bucks	1990	138-7
19 Gibson, Blake S.	Atglen	Chester	1990	138-6
20 Barron, Sheldon	Somerset	Somerset	1991	137-2
21 Chiurazzi, Gary	Pittsburgh	Allegheny	1989	136-6
22 Henry, Lynn A.	Rockwood	Somerset	1989	135-2
23 Sims, Jeff	Sarver	Allegheny	1990	135-0
24 Eiler, Thomas W.	Finleyville	Washington	1986	134-7
24 Kent, Spurgeon S.	Connellsville	Fayette	1989	134-7
26 Yannelli, Bob	King of Prussia	Montgomery	1991	134-6
27 Eiler, Thomas	Finleyville	Allegheny	1991	134-1
28 Stoltenberg, R. Jr.	Butler	Butler	1976	133-3

<u>Rank/Name</u>	<u>Hometown</u>	<u>County Taken</u>	<u>Year Taken</u>	<u>Score</u>
29 Striner, George S.	Connellsville	Fayette	1991	133-0
30 Hicks, Al	St. Benedict	Cambria	1991	132-7
31 Mahala, Joseph E.	Landenber	Chester	1988	132-3
32 Blouir, Dennis	Holbrook	Greene	1990	131-6
33 Mezinze, Matt	Eighty Four	Allegheny	1982	131-3
34 Martini, Mark	Irwin	Westmoreland	1990	130-6
35 Barbetta, Dominick	Mather	Greene	1991	130-5
36 Cassano, Martin	Erie	Mercer	1991	130-1
37 Burns, Daniel	Chicora	Butler	1990	129-1
38 Wick, Durvin	Kylertown	Clearfield	1989	128-4
39 Snyder, Jason H.	Lawrence	Washington	1991	128-2
40 Lafrance, Joe	Meshoppen	Susquehanna	1989	128-1
40 Virgili, Ronald Jr.	Carmichaels	Greene	1991	128-1
42 Keehn, Herman	McDonald	Allegheny	1991	128-0
43 Moore, Donald	Rome	Bradford	1990	127-5
43 Carden, Bill B.	Monongahela	Washington	1991	127-5
45 Steiger, Richard S.	Birdsboro	Berks	1991	127-3
46 Lichtenwalner, David.	Nazareth	Northampton	1990	127-1
47 McCullon, Michael	Harrisville	Venango	1989	126-7
48 Rohaley, Mark	Waltersburg	Fayette	1989	126-6
49 Smith, Jeffrey B.	New Brighton	Beaver	1991	126-4
50 Roscart, Jared	Imperial	Allegheny	1991	126-2
51 Peace, Ken	Williamsport	Lycoming	1990	125-5
52 Knauff, Tim	Greenville	Mercer	1989	125-4
53 Jadus, John	Duryea	Wyoming	1991	124-7
54 Satkowski, Joe	Exeter	Luzerne	1989	124-5
55 Schlosser, Del	Johnstown	Somerset	1990	124-4
55 Strutt, Donald	Gibsonia	Allegheny	1991	124-4
57 Delach, Lou	Pittsburgh	Allegheny	1987	124-2
57 Lamplugh, John	Chadds Ford	Delaware	1991	124-2
59 Ebersole, Vince	Hummelstown	Dauphin	1989	124-0
59 Martini, James	Jeannette	Westmoreland	1991	124-0
61 Trewella, Brian	Trumbauersville	Bucks	1989	123-7
62 Heitzenrater, Doug	Erie	Indiana	1990	123-6
63 Kowalski, John	Reading	Berks	1990	123-4
64 Armstrong, Todd B.	Upper Burrell	Westmoreland	1987	123-3
65 Dunton, Bob	Saegertown	Crawford	1991	123-1



David Mumaw
159-6



David Magiera
143-4



Joe Cardin
20-12



Bill Henry
164-5

<u>Rank/Name</u>	<u>Hometown</u>	<u>County Taken</u>	<u>Year Taken</u>	<u>Score</u>
66 Davis, Ronald	Coatesville	Centre	1987	123-0
66 Bartholomai, A.J. Jr.	S. Connellsville	Somerset	1990	123-0
68 Moyer, Theodore C.	Schuylkill Haven	Schuylkill	1987	122-5
69 Mosier, Jack	Harbor Creek	Erie	1990	122-4
69 Reddick, Bob	Hatfield	Bucks	1990	122-4
69 Evans, Ken	Indiana	Indiana	1991	122-4
69 Yanosky, Margaret	Johnstown	Cambria	1991	122-4
73 Reichert, Carl B. Jr.	Sassamansville	Montgomery	1990	122-1
74 Bohrman, Robert	Schuylkill Haven	Schuylkill	1990	121-6
75 Cessna, Lawrence S.	Emporium	Delaware	1989	121-3
76 Hall, Bruce E.	Mertztown	Berks	1991	121-2
77 Rarrick, David	Ligonier	Lackawanna	1986	121-0
77 Fedor, Michael S.	Greensburg	Westmoreland	1990	121-0
79 Ritter, Raymond	Danville	Montour	1991	119-3
80 Gundlach, Bruce	Conneaut Lake	Crawford	1989	119-2
81 Duke, John	Punxsutawney	Indiana	1990	119-1
82 Deshisky, Thomas	Drums	Luzerne	1989	119-0
83 Mezinze, Matt	Eighty Four	Washington	1983	118-7
83 Croll, Brian N.	Greenville	Mercer	1989	118-7
83 Foster, Robert	Carlton	Mercer	1991	118-7
86 Dugan, Lloyd	Lock Haven	Clinton	1990	118-6
87 Kowalski, Anthony	Noxen	Wyoming	1986	118-4
88 Sheaffer, Larry L.	Shippensburg	Franklin	1991	118-0
89 Novakowski, Mark	Montrose	Susquehanna	1990	117-7
90 Dawson, Ernie	Duncannon	Perry	1990	117-6
90 Govan, James F.	Valencia	Butler	1990	117-6
92 Zimmerman, Jack	Elizabethville	Dauphin	1965	117-4
92 Schnauffer, Lonnie	Gibsonia	Allegheny	1991	117-4
94 Sangricco, Richard G.	Mars	Allegheny	1990	117-3
95 Heil, J. Christopher	Edgemont	Delaware	1990	116-7
95 Mahala, Joseph E.	Landenber	Chester	1991	116-7
97 Myron, Chris	Ligonier	Westmoreland	1991	116-3
98 Hall, Terry	Topton	Berks	1988	116-2
98 Jacobs, Richard	Connellsville	Fayette	1991	116-2
100 Sophor, Dennis	Harrisville	Butler	1991	116-0
101 Horvat, Mike	West Newton	Westmoreland	1989	115-4
102 Hajas, James I.	Rockwood	Allegheny	1990	115-0



Robert Broskey
151-0



Blake Gibson
138-6



Thomas J. Blikle
152-7

A Buck to Remember

The year was 1949, the rifle an 8mm Mauser. Bob Hoffman knew he'd killed a big buck, but he didn't know how nice until it was scored more than half a century later.

By Carl W. McCardell

BOB HOFFMAN'S DESIRE to hunt can be traced back through his grandfather, father, great uncles, uncles and brothers — all were hunters.

Long before this Westmoreland County resident was allowed to carry a gun, he tagged along with his dad and other relatives on hunting excursions. Sometimes he would be just an observer and at others he would kick game out like one of the family beagles.

Although Bob really wanted to hunt, his dad never allowed it while he was still in school. As he tells it, "It was sort of a tradition in the area that kids could hunt only after they were in their later teens."

When it came to hunting, the Hoffman family's specialties were rabbits and deer. Turkeys, pheasants, grouse and even squirrels were fair game, but they didn't enjoy the same status.

As Bob approached the age when he would finally realize his ambition, he was called to serve in World War II. For a year and a half he was away from his family, friends and the land he loved so much.

In 1946, Bob Hoffman came home from foreign soil and was finally able to experience his first real hunting season.

It was a good season, filled with exciting times shared with family and friends. He took his fair share of small game, too, but came away empty-handed in deer season.

The following couple seasons also fill Bob's mind with pleasant memories afield. Small game hunting continued to be a successful experience. Even more important, Bob recalls that he was learning a particular mountain some 20 miles from his home.

"It's the highest point around here," Bob said. "It's about 2,800 feet to the top. In the deer seasons back then, it always snowed, and there would be at least six inches of snow on top."

The area is now part of a state forest, but at the time it was privately owned and open to hunting. Due to timbering operations, the second-growth vegetation made for excellent deer habitat.

It was hard hunting, but buck taken on the mountain were



big, so many hunters found it worth their while to travel to the rugged area.

In 1948, Bob's brother took a dandy buck from the mountain. Frank had known deer were there but had not seen that particular animal. Frank's deer encouraged the whole family to return the following season.

"There weren't as many hunters in the '40s as there are today," Bob recalled. "But the ones who did hunt spent most of the season at it. Some people took a two-week vacation just to hunt."

During the 1949 deer season, however, Bob didn't have to consider using precious vacation time; he got laid off from his job. Strangely, his brother-in-law, Rudolph, also got a pink slip at the same time.

Rather than fret about the loss of work, the two men decided to make use of their unexpected free time. They planned to make as many trips to the mountain as possible.

"We didn't have a cabin in the area and didn't know anyone who did," Bob said. "So, we drove to the area every day."

Hunting was pretty good near where they lived, but people around town were talking about the big buck that were seen on the mountain.

"One hunter was particularly excited," Bob remembered. "He told me about something he had never seen before. He said he had come upon an area where a deer had been pawing the snow in search of food. His rack was so big that when the deer

leaned over to eat, he left an impression of his antlers in the snow."

Bob and Rudolph faithfully hunted on the mountain the first week without seeing a buck. When the second week arrived, Bob was getting discouraged. Rudolph called Thursday evening to confirm Friday's departure time. "Oh, I don't know," Bob told his brother-in-law. "I don't think I'm going."

Rudolph finally talked him into going. They would get an early start and hunt until quitting time.

About 10 inches of snow covered the mountain that day. Tracking would not be a problem. If the big buck — or any buck, for that matter — were here, the evidence would be in the snow.

Morning passed uneventfully, and the pair of hunters had spotted only some does as they either still-hunted or sat.

As the afternoon wore on, it appeared that this day would also be an unsuccessful one. So, at 4 p.m., Bob decided to head back to the car.

Careful of his step while starting down the mountain, Bob almost failed to notice he was being watched. "The deer was staring right at me," he said. "I didn't have to look twice to see if it was a buck."

At a distance of about 150 feet, Bob carefully raised his 8mm Mauser and fired. The deer dropped in its tracks.

Hurrying toward his prize, Bob could hardly believe his eyes. The trophy rack had 12 points and huge bases. After field-dressing the animal, Bob waited to see if Rudolph had heard him shoot.

When Rudolph saw the deer he did a double take. Congratulations were in order, but with darkness beginning to set in they hurried to get the animal back to the car where they could further admire the rack.

"While I walked down the mountain, Rudolph sort of rode the deer down the steep side in bursts of 15 to 20 yards," Bob recalled.



THE MORNING was uneventful for the two hunters — all they saw were some doe. By afternoon, Bob was ready to hang it up.

IN THOSE DAYS, deer were tied onto cars' big fenders. This one was so big a gas station attendant thought it was an elk.

"In those days we tied the deer to the big fenders of the cars," he said. "When we pulled into the gas station for fuel, the mechanic came running out and asked if we had gotten an elk." This was the reaction of many people who first saw Bob's trophy from a distance.

The two brothers butchered the deer that night and carefully skinned out the cape. This was definitely one Bob wanted to get mounted and not only because it was his first deer.

The taxidermist agreed it was an impressive trophy and assured Bob that he would probably never get another one quite like it again.

"My brother Frank had gotten his deer mounted by Mr. Kettering and it cost him \$25. When I got mine mounted the price really jumped. It cost me \$28," Bob said with a chuckle.

Bob has proudly displayed the buck in his home for 43 years. Although he's taken several other nice deer, the taxidermist's prediction held true. The others pale in comparison.

Several visitors who have seen Bob's big deer have encouraged him to have it measured at one of the Game Commission measuring programs. No one encouraged him more than his nephew, Barry Gardner.

"That deer just looked like it belonged in the record book," Barry commented. "I was nine years old when I first saw the deer. It was my father who helped my uncle get the deer off the mountain."

Whenever a measuring program came up, Barry would call to remind his uncle to take it in. But something always came up, and the deer still wasn't measured.



When the latest Game Commission program was scheduled, Barry arranged to go along with Bob in order that there would not be any excuses. Bob figured the rack would go maybe 165; Barry came up with a score around 175 to 180.

Barry's measuring job was pretty accurate; the official score turned out to be 174⁶/₈. This placed Bob Hoffman's deer 10th on the state's all-time list.

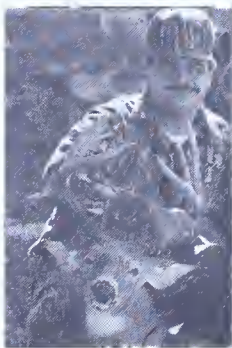
Bob was notified that his deer was the largest typical whitetail taken by a gun and measured during the 1992 scoring session. This meant a trip to Carlisle was in the making, where he would receive an award at the Pennsylvania Outdoor Writer's Association banquet.

Bob's modesty and disinterest in notoriety kept him from attending. Instead, Barry Gardner received the award on behalf of his uncle. In a day when slob hunters seem to get the general media attention and there are those after fame who don't deserve it, it's nice to know there are humble yet deserving guys out there like Bob.

Firearms Deer — Typical

Rank/Name	Hometown	County Taken	Year Taken	Score
1 Hoffman, Robert	Mt. Pleasant	Westmoreland	1949	174-6
2 Shaffer, Robert		Mercer	1956	168-3
*Dunsworth, Wally	Edinboro			
3 Davis, Deborah	Ligonier	Washington	1989	167-2
4 McCrea, Scott	Freeport	Armstrong	1989	163-4

<u>Rank/Name</u>	<u>Hometown</u>	<u>County Taken</u>	<u>Year Taken</u>	<u>Score</u>
5 Drienka, Joe	Chesterland, OH	Crawford	1955	163-2
6 Neith, Ed Sr.		Monroe	1936	163-1
*Neith, Ed Jr.	Catasauqua			
7 Stewart, Harold	Armagh	Indiana	1991	162-5
8 Crappio, Jim	Industry	Beaver	1985	160-5
9 Litzelman, John		Bradford	1932	160-4
*Bahl, John	New Albany			
10 Mumaw, David	Harrisonburg, VA	Sullivan	1990	159-6
11 Caldwell, Brian	Connellsville	Fayette	1990	159-5
12 Beebe, Evelyn m.	Grove city	Butler	1989	158-4
13 Beltz, David B.	Telford	Montgomery	1989	157-3
14 Kalie, Robert	Orangeville	Columbia	1988	157-0
15 Durand, Douglas	Williamsport	Lycoming	1990	156-4
16 Bennett, Janet	Adamsburg	Allegheny	1991	156-1
17 Nury, John	Cheswick	Allegheny	1990	156-0
18 Burlingame, Beryl		Elk	1930	154-4
*Sheffield Rod & Gun Club	Sheffield			
18 Armstrong, Todd B.	Upper Burrell	Westmoreland	1988	154-4
20 Morrison, Albert D.	Valencia	Butler	1989	154-3
21 Bergland, O.W.		Potter	1930	154-1
*Williams, Adam	Westville			
22 Gray, George	Prospect	Armstrong	1945	153-7
23 Brown, Ferris E.		Wayne	1952	153-5
*Brown, Edward	Mayfield			
24 Aiken, Richard	Wampum	Lawrence	1990	153-0
24 Vetovich, Mike	Mars	Allegheny	1990	153-0
26 Shaw, Harry		Forest	1926	152-7
*Sheffield Rod & Gun Club	Sheffield			
26 Chaney, Joe	Buffalo Mills	Somerset	1942	152-7
26 Blikle, Tom	Harrisburg	Dauphin	1989	152-7
29 Arrowood, Michael	Mehoopany	Wyoming	1991	152-6
30 Loutzenhiser, F. Jr.	Conneaut Lake	Crawford	1989	152-4
31 Simpson, C.A. Jr.	Franklin	Venango	1988	152-3
31 Hammer, James	Emmaus	Lehigh	1990	152-3
33 Dobson, Floyd J.	Kulpmont	Northumberland	1988	152-2
34 Johnson, Charles	Butler	Butler	1989	152-1
35 Spittler, Miles R.	Newmanstown	Lebanon	1989	151-7
36 Meyers, Pius		Somerset	1935	151-2
*Ickes, William C.	Manns Choice			
37 Dressler, Boyd Jr.	Catawissa	Montour	1989	151-1
38 Broskey, Robert	Keisterville	Fayette	1991	151-0
39 Deffibaugh, Alan	Osterburg	Bedford	1989	150-7



Martin Cassano
130-1



Brian Caldwell
159-5

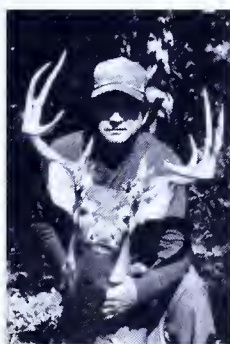


William Ames
21-03

<u>Rank/Name</u>	<u>Hometown</u>	<u>County Taken</u>	<u>Year Taken</u>	<u>Score</u>
40 Emerick, John M.	Hyndman	Bedford	1958	150-6
41 Love, Thomas	Creighton	Allegheny	1989	150-2
42 Broadhead, J.J. *Mackins, Joe	Brookville	Jefferson	1949	149-7
43 Takacs, James	Pittsburgh	Westmoreland	1990	149-2
44 Doering, Todd C.	Chalfont	Bucks	1989	149-1
44 Johnson, Carl	Harrisburg	Lycoming	1989	149-1
46 Berkhimer, A.C. Sr.	Portage	Blair	1943	148-6
46 Althouse, Charles E.	Hamburg	Schuylkill	1948	148-6
48 Graham, Terry L.	Ft. Loudon	Franklin	1990	148-5
49 Sarmiento, Bob Jr.	Downingtown	Chester	1989	148-4
50 Slee, Hershel *Trostle, Robert J.	Altoona	Centre	1956	148-3
51 Sturgeon, Wade	Fombell	Lawrence	1990	148-0
52 Klimke, Robert C.	Coraopolis	Allegheny	1990	147-6
53 Crossgrove, Samuel *Smith, Earl	Middleburg	Centre	1924	147-4
54 Rorabaugh, Roger	LaJosa	Clearfield	1990	147-3
55 Nicotera, C.J. Jr.	Chatham	Chester	1990	147-1
55 Hite, Donald V.	Bedford	Bedford	1991	147-1
57 Toner, Rod	Lock Haven	Clinton	1984	147-0
57 Snyder, Charles	Oxford	Chester	1990	147-0
59 Sparr, Ivan Dick *Sparr, David L.	Morgantown	Berks	1953	146-6
59 Hoffman, Doug	Greensburg	Westmoreland	1988	146-6
61 Brown, Michael	Milan	Bradford	1991	146-5
62 Galardini, Robert	Harrisburg	Erie	1980	146-4
63 Slocum, James	Spartensburg	Warren	1930	146-2
63 Warner, William *Warner, Andrew	Pine Grove	Schuylkill	1948	146-2
63 Cowher, Mike	New Castle	Lawrence	1989	146-2
63 Meyer, Dave	Mars	Allegheny	1991	146-2
67 Wishoski, Walter E. *Freeport Sports Club	Freeport	Armstrong	1956	146-0
67 Arendosh, Brian	Rochester	Beaver	1989	146-0
69 Herzing, Phillip *Piccirillo, P.J.	DuBois	Elk	1924	145-7
70 Lang, Gerald T.	Plum	Crawford	1991	145-6
70 Stauffer, Brian	Boyertown	Berks	1991	145-6
72 Carter, Ronald	Glen Rock	Centre	1989	145-3
73 Brokaw, Harry	Grover	Bradford	1990	145-2
74 Nalepa, Thomas E.	Polk	Venango	1989	145-0



Chris Sheatz
181-1



Russell Dillow
173-0



Tom Eiler
20-12

<u>Rank/Name</u>	<u>Hometown</u>	<u>County Taken</u>	<u>Year Taken</u>	<u>Score</u>
75 Shultz, Rex A. Sr.	Berwick	Columbia	1990	144-5
75 Spalvieri, Paul	McDonald	Allegheny	1990	144-5
75 Welty, Paul J.	Williamsport	Lycoming	1990	144-5
78 Rodriguez, James	Verona	Allegheny	1989	144-4
78 Bendick, Frank	Boswell	Somerset	1990	144-4
80 Braho, Gerald	Sharon	Mercer	1989	144-3
80 Stallsmith, Terry	Townville	Crawford	1989	144-3
80 Stoltzfus, Mahlon F.	New Holland	Lancaster	1991	144-3
83 Needhammer, George	Meshoppen	Luzerne	1953	144-1
83 Waltonbaugh, Jack	Buena Vista	Allegheny	1984	144-1
85 Dibble, Kern	Meshoppen	Wyoming	1968	143-6
85 Roher, Darryl	N. Versailles	Allegheny	1989	143-6
85 Gardner, M.M.	Bellwood	Blair	1991	143-6
85 Henry, Garry	Knox	Clarion	1991	143-6
89 Wilson, Dwayne R.	Lititz	Sullivan	1990	143-2
90 Hopwood, Gary	Georgetown	Beaver	1968	143-1
90 Tarr, Michael R.	Oil City	Venango	1970	143-1
90 Texter, Michael	Wyomissing	Chester	1989	143-1
93 Earhart, Suzi	Jeannette	Westmoreland	1990	143-0
93 Stover, Don	Cambridge Springs	Crawford	1991	143-0
95 Pattakos, George	Liberty Boro	Allegheny	1989	142-7
96 Morton, Joseph	Mill Hall	Clinton	1960	142-6
96 Spencer, Dennis E.	Georgetown	Beaver	1989	142-6
98 Burton, Benjamin P.	Stewartstown	York	1988	142-5
99 Allyn, Todd	Sugar Run	Bradford	1990	142-4
99 Trohoske, Robert	Erie	Erie	1991	142-4
101 Phillips, Mark A.	Fleetwood	Bradford	1989	142-3
102 Coyle, Jeff	Levittown	Bucks	1991	142-2
103 Phillips, Leroy		Northumberland	1960	142-1
*Zerbe, Charles	Muir			
103 Keith, Allen	Three Springs	Huntingdon	1991	142-1
105 Frey, Ronald	Stevens	Chester	1988	142-0
105 Jasper, John	Wellsboro	Tioga	1990	142-0
107 Eakin, R.J.		Venango	1930	141-7
*Eakin, Jack	Franklin			
107 Lynn, Eric	Oxford	Chester	1990	141-7
109 Mele, Felix M.	New Castle	Lawrence	1989	141-5
110 Erb, Stephen K.	Fleetwood	Berks	1989	141-1
111 Masteller, Steven	Catawissa	Columbia	1991	141-0
112 Haniwalt, Jeff	Oil City	Venango	1985	140-7
112 Schreffler, Curtis	King of Prussia	Lycoming	1990	140-7
114 Jackson, Frank	Corry	Erie	1989	140-4
114 Sweigart, John W.	New Holland	Chester	1989	140-4
114 Paich, Richard M.	Aliquippa	Crawford	1990	140-4
117 Rick, E.A.		Potter	1935	140-2
*Freeport Sports Club	Freeport			
117 Strohl, Robert J. Jr.	New Hope	Bucks	1991	140-2
119 Weinell, Tom Sr.		Potter	1932	140-1
*Bliazes, J./Zydonik, J.	Apollo			
120 Dodge, Ronald	Erie	Erie	1983	140-0

Pickup Deer — Typical

1 PA Game Commission	Ligonier	Allegheny	1991	150-7
2 Thompson, Jack	Glenshaw	Erie	1990	145-0
3 Figured, Dan	Scranton	Unknown	Unknown	142-0
4 Blaine, James	New Bloomfield	Cumberland	1915	141-2

* denotes owner

Hunter of the Night

The great horned owl is a fearsome predator often blamed, unjustifiably, for decimating some game populations. Penn State researchers developed a method of censusing owl populations to learn more about the animal.

**By Richard H. Yahner &
Thomas E. Morrell**

IT'S FEBRUARY and much of the Pennsylvania countryside is covered with snow. Nights are long and cold and seemingly inhospitable to all but the hardiest souls. But from January through much of March, the great horned owl (*Bubo virginianus*) is busy establishing territories, caring for eggs and young, and hunting fields and field edges for food.

The great horned owl is the state's largest native owl, with a body length of nearly two feet. Its range extends throughout the commonwealth and stretches widely across the Americas. They are found as far north as the Arctic and as far south as the Straits of Magellan.

The great horned owl begins courtship in early winter. Its hooting, usually a series of about eight calls, can be heard in the winter night. The hoots serve to establish and maintain territorial boundaries.

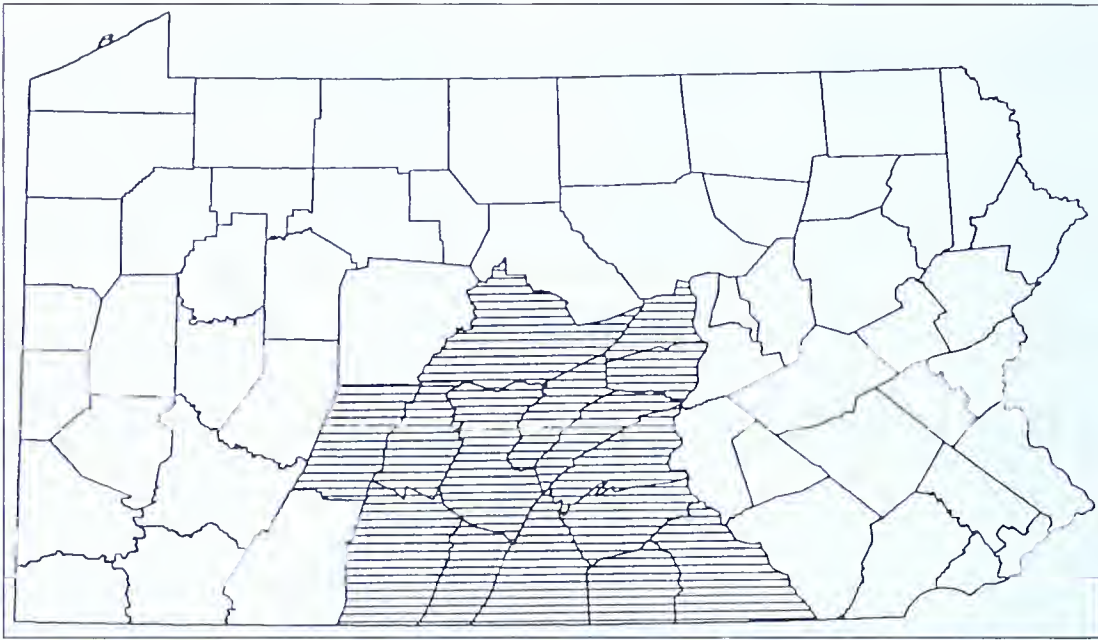
After mating, two white eggs are laid as early as January, often in an abandoned red-tailed hawk nest. It is also known to nest in natural tree cavities, on stumps, in caves, on rocky outcrops and, rarely, even on the ground. Incubation is 26 to 35 days, and young leave the nest within about 35 days of hatching.

The great horned owl has not always been looked upon favorably by the public. It is an opportunistic feeder whose diet includes species viewed as valuable to humans. The perceived threat to domestic animals and game species led the Game Commission to establish a bounty of \$2 per owl beginning in 1937. The bounty was discontinued during World War II but reinstated from 1944 to 1966.

However, an extensive study conducted by Judy Wink, Dr. Stan Senner and Laurie Goodrich showed that the great horned owl dines relatively infrequently on game species. Rather, it is a major predator of pests such as the Norway rat. Thus, its reputation as being responsible for rabbit and pheasant declines is unjustified.

Still, the controversy surrounding the great horned owl's impact





The study was performed in a 15-county area. The region was chosen for its variety of farmland and forest land habitats, which allowed researchers to study habitat preferences.

on rabbits and pheasants survived into the 1980s. This controversy led to an April 1986 resolution from the state House of Representatives requesting that the U.S. Department of Interior assist the Game Commission in assessing the owl's population.

At that time, no survey technique was available to determine the owl's status. Penn State researchers were asked to develop one that was both cost and labor efficient. It had to enable wildlife personnel to monitor populations over a number of years in order to yield long-term trends. That, in turn, could give insight as to whether owl populations were perhaps related to declines in game species.

As with most nongame animals, the great horned owl's habitat requirements are not well understood. Those requirements can be vital in determining the influence of current and future land-use practices on population trends.

We conducted a three-year study of the great horned owl, beginning in 1986. Our study had two objectives. First, we wanted to develop a technique that would allow long-term monitoring of owl populations. Second, we hoped to determine habitat use.

The study was conducted in 15

southcentral counties. The study area included three physiographic regions: Ridge and Valley, Blue Ridge and Piedmont. We chose this area because it contained a variety of forested and farmland habitats.

Fifty-six 10-mile survey routes were selected. On each route, we established 10 stations one mile apart. In 1987 and '88, the survey routes were driven between dusk and dawn from early January to late May.

Survey Procedure

For two minutes after arriving at a station, we listened for owl hoots. Then for five minutes we broadcasted a tape-recorded hooting (obtained from the Cornell University Library of Natural Sounds) using a speaker/amplifier system. During this broadcast, and in the next five minutes, we recorded the distance and the direction of owls that responded.

We also noted time of day, temperature, wind velocity, amount of cloud cover, and presence or absence of precipitation at each visit to a station. We were assisted by Game Commission personnel and student volunteers from Penn State on some of the survey routes.

In order to determine habitat use, we examined characteristics within a half-

mile radius of each station. Each station was classified as forest, farm, mixture of the two, or mixed.

The classifications were based on aerial photographs and criteria established by the Commission.

Then, within each half-mile radius, we measured land-use cover types, elevation, percentages of various land uses (agricultural, forest, urban, etc.) and other characteristics. Also, if owls were heard on two or more visits to a station it was designated a high-use area; a station was a low-use area if one or no owls were heard.

We recorded 1,042 contacts of great horned owls during our study. More contacts, 40 percent, were noted in January than in other months. The number of contacts also differed with time of day. Owls were particularly vocal between 10 p.m. and 2 a.m., accounting for about 63 percent of the total. Owls were more likely to call on windless nights (82 percent of total contacts).

Temperature, Moon a Factor

We also found that the owls vocalized more often when temperatures dropped below freezing. Furthermore, almost half of the owl vocalizations occurred when the moon was between a quarter and full.

Based on these findings, we recommended to the Commission that surveys for great horned owls be conducted early in January when most great horned owls are paired, their territories are being defended, and their nesting activities are likely underway.

We also believe chances of hearing a great horned owl are better near or after midnight, when winds are calm, temperatures are below freezing, and the moon is between quarter and full phases. If these conditions are met, great horned owls will be more easily detected.

How do these weather conditions influence calling by great horned owls? Because colder air is more dense than warmer air, sound travels better as temperatures become colder. So when a great horned owl gives its call in late night or early morning, when temperatures are colder and winds are calmer, its call travels farther.

This probably enhances the owl's ability to defend and maintain its territory from neighboring great horned owls.

We can't explain why great horned owls call more often between quarter and full moon phases. Other owls, such as boreal and northern saw-whet, also show that tendency.

Great horned owls can be viewed as habitat generalists because they are found in a variety of habitats. In our study area, we estimated that 56 percent of the countryside was occupied by breeding great horned owls. Areas most often used by great horned owls (high-use areas) tended to be relatively lower in elevation, were near agricultural lands, and had lower forest cover.

Agricultural lands and forest edges are important to great horned owls for hunting. Lower elevations are often farmed, hence providing a suitable mix of agricultural and forest lands. Other studies of great horned owls have indicated that distribution and density are enhanced in woodlots that are near extensive non-forested land.

Because great horned owls occur in many different habitats, we could not formulate definitive recommendations for habitat management. We believe, however, that land-use practices which create openings in forested areas may contribute to increases in great horned owl populations.

When forested areas are broken up into small woodlots, housing developments and parks, habitat conditions may become more suitable for prey species. But in extensively agricultural areas, nest trees and roosting sites may be limiting factors.

The great horned owl will remain an important part of our landscape. More and more people are beginning to appreciate how important birds of prey are to a functioning ecosystem.

Some night this winter, when the moon is just right and the wind is calm, go to a nearby woodlot. Remain still and quiet for a few minutes; if you're lucky, you may hear in the distance the hoots of a great horned owl — the majestic hunter of the night.



FIELD NOTES



Timeless Rules

CLARION COUNTY — When my father died last November, I reflected on our hunting trips together. Although formal Hunter-Trapper Education didn't exist when I began hunting in the early 1960s, my brother and I were lucky enough to have a father who strictly taught firearms safety: always assume a firearm is loaded and check it before handling; always point a gun in a safe direction; and never point a firearm at something you don't intend to shoot. These rules are still the cornerstones of safe firearms handling, and my brother and I will always remember where we learned them. — WCO Alan C. Scott, New Bethlehem.



All in a Night's Work

BRADFORD COUNTY — State Park personnel at Whipple's Dam had to remove some damaged and diseased hybrid poplar. They cut down the trees and unloaded two dumptrucks' worth near the water's edge. In one night, beavers living in the dam removed a whole load. Talk about recycling. — WCO William A. Bower, Troy.

Crossing His Fingers

SUSQUEHANNA COUNTY — I recently got to see my first peregrine falcon. Unfortunately, it had been hit by a car. It was taken to a rehabilitator here, and then moved to Cornell University for treatment. I hope the beautiful bird survives and can return to the wild. — WCO Charles J. Arcovitch, Kingsley.

Planting a Future

I'd like to thank the Lehigh County 4H Wildlife Club and organizers Lisa Lepeta and Darlene Brosky for their efforts on SGL 205. Each year we need to gather more than half a ton of sawtooth oak acorns for use at Howard Nursery. The club came out on a Saturday morning, and by noon they'd collected 200 pounds. The group ranged from toddlers to adults, and they should be proud of their accomplishment. Anyone interested in becoming involved in projects like this may contact the nearest Game Commission region office. — LMO Bruce C. Metz, Schwenksville.

Anchors Aweigh

CLEARFIELD COUNTY — Greetings to Lt. Cmdr. Jonathan G. Roark, chief engineer on the USS Wabash, currently deployed in the Persian Gulf. He wrote me last November, saying how much he eagerly awaits the arrival of his *Game News*. "It provides an escape from the stress of the job," he wrote. "It brings back fond memories of hunting trips past and fuels the imagination for trips to come." Thanks, Commander, for letting us know that our magazine brings joy to some of our servicemen and women. — WCO Colleen Shannon, Luthersburg.

Still Waiting

LUZERNE COUNTY — While hunting small game I saw a person kill more than his limit of pheasants. I decided to wait by his vehicle until he returned. He had four dead pheasants in his game bag and a live one in the toolbox of his truck. I explained the violations and fines to him, at which point he told me I should've been watching his neighbor instead of hassling him. He said the neighbor was a "real poacher" who'd shot two deer in archery season. I asked him what the difference was between that and what he'd done. I'm still waiting for an answer. — WCO Edward J. Zindell, Wilkes-Barre.

They're Not Pets

ERIE COUNTY — A local woman saw a large buck in her backyard and became nervous when the animal began butting the deck and sliding glass door. She called her father, who came over armed with a rifle — just in case. After the deer destroyed her swimming pool and a barbeque, the father fired a few shots to scare the buck. The deer attacked him, seriously injuring him and destroying his rifle. It was a tame deer that had gotten out of its pen. The year before, the same deer had almost killed its owner. Wild animals *do not* make good pets. — WCO Wayne Lugaila, Waterford.

Out on a Limb

ALLEGHENY COUNTY — Deputy Gary Bucsek met two fellows who will probably think twice before stopping to pick up a fresh roadkill. The men saw a buck get hit, and they stopped to get it. They thought it was dead, but when one of them grabbed its antlers, the buck jumped up and chased him into a tree. The other man went to get the police, who dispatched the deer and helped the frightened man from an apple tree. Never underestimate injured wildlife or you may find yourself "out on a limb." — WCO R.T. Cramer, White Oak.



Do It Yourself

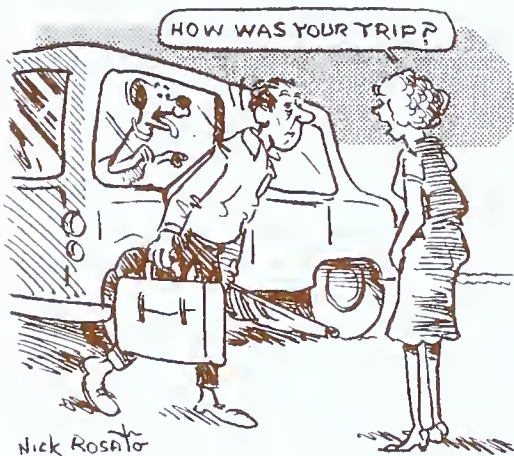
BLAIR COUNTY — I returned home from a recent night patrol to find two raccoons had raided my trash can and were rummaging through the garbage strewn across the yard. I radioed the office to say I was off-duty, and then told the dispatcher what I was seeing. The dispatcher acknowledged my off-duty call but said I shouldn't even think of filing a nuisance wildlife complaint. — WCO Steve Kleiner, Altoona.

But You Could Be Famous

POTTER COUNTY — While removing a beaver dam from a sluice pipe one day, I was approached by a group of sportsmen armed with a video camera. They wanted to know if I was the guy they kept reading about in Field Notes, the one who has trouble handling beaver cases. Well, for once everything went smoothly, and I won't end up as a subject on one of those funniest home video shows. — WCO Butch Camp, Ulysses.

Strong Nest

While we provide wildlife with a number of artificial nesting devices, we also unwittingly provide other nest sites. One day while unlocking a game lands gate, I discovered a white-footed mouse had nested in a gate post and had given birth to several young. — LMO Shayne Hoachlander, Franklin.



Long, Smelly Ride

GREENE COUNTY — I heard about a local LMO who went on a bird hunt of a lifetime to Saskatchewan. I won't say who it was (it certainly wasn't Dick Belding), but on the last day of the hunt his infallible dog decided to attack some skunks. As might be expected, the 3,000-mile drive home in a closed van made somebody wish they'd brought a deer rack along to transport the dog. You can borrow mine next time, Dick. — WCO Robert P. Shaffer, Carmichaels.

Something in Common

I like to work bear check stations because it gives me a chance to talk to many sportsmen. Last year I spoke with an 81-year-old man who'd taken his second bear in 40 years. I also checked a bear killed by a 15-year-old, his first in three years of hunting. Although the two were separated by a 66-year age gap, their faces showed a common bond — the gleam and enthusiasm of a hunter. — LMO James Deniker, Sandy Lake.

Wide Variety

Hunter-Trapper Education instructors are constantly challenged to accommodate a variety of students. A recent class at the Mercersburg Sportsmens Club had 150 students, ranging in age from 11 to 80; in addition to local people, there were students from West Virginia, Maryland and Denmark. — Information & Education Supervisor Don Garner, Huntingdon.

Don't Try This

GREENE COUNTY — George Huebschman was teaching survival at a hunter-ed class, and he was explaining what to do if you get lost: sit down, build a fire and wait until help comes. I heard one kid exclaim, "My dad said to just shoot something illegal, then turn around and talk to the game warden." I don't think his dad meant it quite that way. — WCO Rodney S. Ansell, Rogersville.

Pitching In

ERIE COUNTY — The Albion and Northwestern sportsmen's clubs have taken a hands-on interest in SGL 101. Coordinating their efforts through the Bureau of Land Management, they've improved habitat and erected nesting boxes to increase breeding opportunities for wood ducks and songbirds. The two groups were assigned realistically sized project areas, and the organizations have involved youth in the undertakings as well. — WCO Jack Farster, Albion.

Unusual Bear

Last bear season a sizable cinnamon bear was brought into the check station at Shohola. PGC Biologist Gary Alt said this color phase is extremely uncommon here. He'd once seen a cinnamon sow with cubs, but the cubs remained black as they matured. The cinnamon got a lot of attention at the check station, and it was a big hit with photographers. — LMO John C. Shutkufski, Damascus.

A Really Big Gun

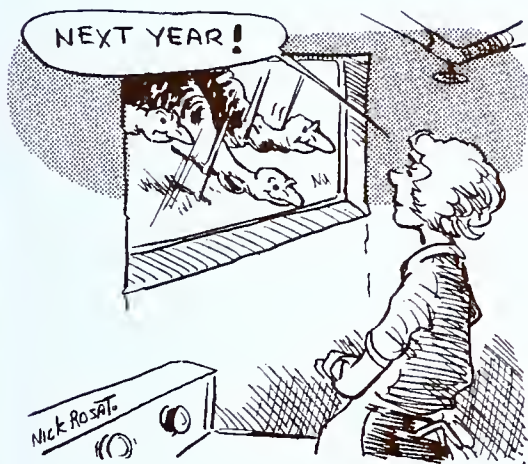
FRANKLIN COUNTY — Spotlighting while in possession of a firearm is a violation our officers take seriously. Recently, Deputies George Pogue and Dick Swanger livened things up a bit when they called over the radio that they'd just checked a guy spotlighting with a "cannon." Only later did we find out that the man was using a spotlight so he could film deer at night with his Canon camcorder. — WCO Frank Clark, Fayetteville.

Scouting Paid for Some

CAMERON COUNTY — The value of preseason scouting was demonstrated clearly last season. There were few acorns, but the beechnuts were plentiful, especially in the northern half of the county. Not surprisingly, 70 percent of our bear harvest occurred in the northern part, and many of our bigger bucks came from that area as well. Wise hunters who scouted knew the conditions and made adjustments; those who relied on their old spots without checking food supplies were disappointed. — WCO Joe Carlos, Driftwood.

Inconvenience Brings Improvement

I've had to cultivate a third of SGL 247 and plant it to winter grains in an effort to establish warm season grasses. I realize this has removed some winter cover, but if everything I read about warm season grasses is true, the temporary inconvenience will be worth the permanent improvement. — LMO Robert H. Muir, Kittanning.



Better Luck Next Time

WAYNE COUNTY — I want to wish Carol Walker of Hamlin better luck this spring gobbler season. Seems she'd hunted diligently all fall and came up empty. The day after the season, she heard a strange tapping sound and discovered six adult gobblers pecking at their reflections in a cellar window. — WCO Donald R. Schauer, Honesdale.

Spotlighting Decline

There seemed to be a decrease in spotlighting last year. I wonder if it was due to the economic recession or to some complaints from our rural community. Regardless, it's a shame that this fine family activity seems to be declining here. — LMO W. Pat Anderson, Titusville.



In a Tangle

Many of us joke about "tying one up" before deer season, but one Food & Cover employee wasn't laughing last archery season. After getting situated in his portable tree stand, he forgot to pull up the cord he uses to retrieve his gear. When a large buck walked under his stand, it became momentarily tangled in the dangling cord. It then walked away without giving Newt a shot. — LMO Clay VanBuskirk, Millerstown.

Well Hidden

ADAMS COUNTY — Over the years my wife and I have cared for a lot of wild animals. We've had squirrels in the kitchen, fawns in the basement and boxes full of baby possums. A groundhog once got underneath my dashboard and chewed the wiring, and some hissing baby barn owls once made me stop to check my tires. Recently, I was keeping an injured screech owl in a sealed box in my office. But somehow it escaped, and when I finally found it, it had crawled inside my desk. — WCO Larry Haynes, Gettysburg.

The Proverbial Bull

CRAWFORD COUNTY — Back in general small game season, Deputy Bud Price handled a call at a local flower shop. He arrived at the store in downtown Meadville to find the lights dimmed and door open. And he found the problem, too — a hen pheasant had roosted atop a display of expensive china. With a fishing net, patience and some prayers from the employees, Bud secured the bird. — WCO Mark A. Allegro, Meadville.



Take a Vacation

MONROE COUNTY — I realize my deputies squeeze as many hours as they can into conservation work. But when their report on a bear complaint reads that a sow and three cubs were playing on a swingset — one cub sitting on a swing and swatting at the sibling that was trying to push it — I think I'll have to order them to take a few days off. — WCO Thomas M. Smith, Bartonsville.

Learning Experience

WESTMORELAND COUNTY — We recently conducted a tour of SGL 42, and I was surprised at the number of people who didn't know how many non-hunting activities game lands offer. They didn't realize the hiking, biking, birdwatching, fishing and other enjoyments to be had on these lands that were purchased by sportsmen and women. — WCO R.D. Hixson, Ligonier.

Moving Men

LYCOMING COUNTY — Last October, Deputy Rob Barbour and I responded to a report of an injured bear along Route 87. It took us a while to find the injured animal in the dark; it had gone down a steep bank. We tranquilized the bear so we could better check its condition, but then we discovered it was too big to pull up the bank. The Plunketts Creek Volunteer Fire Dept. arrived, and it wasn't long before the crew and its equipment had gotten the bear up. This wasn't the first time they'd helped me, and I wanted to say thanks. — WCO Dan Marks, Montoursville.

Blue Chip Investment

PERRY COUNTY — Perhaps one of the best investments anyone can make is to buy a hunting license. By purchasing one you're able to enjoy countless hours of recreation, fresh air, friendship, stress management, and perhaps some wild game to eat. Plus, hunting brings priceless memories. Think what it costs for health club memberships, personal counseling and store-bought meat. You just can't lose on the price of a hunting license. — WCO James L. Brown, Loysville.

Turkey Success

MERCER COUNTY — The agency's turkey management program is very successful here. A Greenville resident told me of some of his experiences in Management Area No. 1. Historically, there were no turkeys in the area. While the man was camping last spring, he heard turkeys and was able to get close enough to witness the mating ritual between a gobbler and a hen. Later that year — in the same woodlot — he found a nest with eight eggs, and when he next checked the nest, six had hatched. During the summer he saw the hen and her poults several times, and last archery season he again saw the hen and the six juveniles. — WCO Donald G. Chaybin, Greenville.

Commission proposes 6-week archery deer season

AT THE JANUARY MEETING the Commission proposed a package of 1993-94 hunting and trapping seasons and bag limits that in most cases are similar to those of recent years.

The Commission tentatively approved a six-week archery deer season. The proposed season would open Saturday, Oct. 2 and continue through Saturday, Nov. 13.

Beginning with the 1993-94 seasons, archers will need a valid antlerless deer license to harvest an antlerless deer.

In the past, archers could take one deer of either sex, using the ear tag and report card that are part of the regular hunting license. As part of regulations previously approved by the Commission, beginning in 1993 all antlerless deer licenses will have their own ear tags and report cards.

The archer will now be allowed to take an antlerless deer only in a county for which he has a valid deer tag.

Traditionally, prior to 1992, the fall archery season closed the day before general small game season opened. Last year the Commission approved an experimental, buck-only archery season that opened the first Monday of the general small game season and closed the first Saturday. The either-sex archery hunt ended Friday before general small game and wild turkey seasons opened.

Under the 1993 proposal, archery season will remain open on the first day of general small game and wild turkey seasons. Like last year, archers will be required to wear fluorescent orange during the portion of the season that overlaps with general small game.

The complete package of proposed hunting and trapping seasons and bag limits will go before the Commission for final adoption at an April 5-6 meeting. Public comment on these proposed seasons and bag limits will be accepted until the end of March.

Although most business before the Commission concerned seasons and bag

limits, the commissioners and the public were also briefed by staff on agency youth programs and the threat from anti-hunting organizations.

Information & Education Supervisor Bob MacWilliams gave a presentation on the well-received Youth Field Day programs that have been successful in attracting large numbers of kids in the Northwest Region. These day-long events, made possible by the tremendous cooperation and involvement by sportsmen, state agencies and private concerns, are designed to expose youngsters to hunting, shooting, conservation and other outdoor activities.

Ed Sherlinski, MacWilliams' counterpart in the Northeast Region, treated the audience to a slide program on the Youth Hunter Education Championships. The annual NRA-sponsored event is held in Raton, NM, and Sherlinski's slides detailed the state's involvement at last year's nationals.

Lantz Hoffman, Information & Education bureau director, pointed to the need to convince nonhunters that wildlife management programs and strategies are sound and defensible. Hoffman noted that we will never sway anti-hunters, but the general, uncommitted public will ultimately decide how we manage wildlife and whether hunting and trapping will remain a part of that scheme. He called for increased agency support for education efforts.



1993-94 Proposed Seasons

Early small game (squirrels, grouse) — Oct. 16–Nov. 27

General small game (rabbits, pheasants) — Oct. 30–Nov. 27

Fall turkey

Management Areas 2A, 2B and open section of Area 1 — Oct. 30–Nov. 6

Management Areas 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8 — Oct. 30–Nov. 13

Deer (archery) — Oct. 2–Nov. 13 and Dec. 27–Jan. 8

Bear — Nov. 22–24

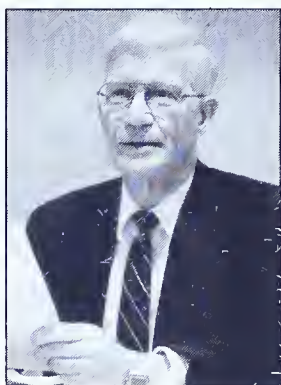
Deer (buck) — Nov. 29–Dec. 11

Deer (antlerless) — Dec. 13–15

Late small game — Dec. 27–Jan. 22

Deer (muzzleloader) — Dec. 27–Jan. 8

Other Commission action



George Miller

George Miller, Brockway, was elected to serve as president of the Game Commission.

Miller, a retired educator who worked for 35 years as a vocational agriculture and conservation-agriculture resources teacher in the Brockway Area School District, has

served as a commissioner since June 1989. Miller has undergraduate and graduate degrees from Penn State.

The board also elected Commissioner Roy Wagner, York, as vice president. Edward Vogue, Dupont, was elected secretary.

During its three-day meeting, the Commission also:

- ◆ Accepted the donation of three properties totaling 96.5 acres in Berks, Potter and Warren counties. The tracts will be included in the game lands system.
- ◆ Approved a mining lease/land exchange authorizing Bologna Coal Company, Burgettstown, to remove coal from 3.7 acres of abandoned mine workings on SGL 117 in Washington County in exchange for 120 acres adjacent to SGL 169 in Cumberland County. The mined

area will be reclaimed when the operation is completed.

- ◆ Approved the purchase of six properties totaling 236.7 acres in Butler, Jefferson, Indiana and Northampton counties for a sum of \$111,341.50. The tracts also will be included into the game lands system.
- ◆ Approved a \$109,000 grant to Penn State's Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit. The money will be used to hire four full-time wildlife biologists to work in the upcoming pheasant restoration program.
- ◆ Gave preliminary approval to change regulations on game lands firearms ranges. Under the proposal, only firearms permitted for hunting in Pennsylvania may be used on game lands ranges. Also, groups would be allowed to reserve a game lands range only from Jan. 1 to Oct. 1. Group range reservations must be made 20 days in advance.
- ◆ Agreed to recommend to the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service that Berks, Chester and Delaware counties be included in the 1993 early resident Canada goose hunt in the Southeast. The hunt, designed to reduce crop damage and nuisance complaints, was held in Bucks, Lehigh,

Montgomery, Butler, Mercer, Crawford and Erie counties last year.

- ◆ Gave preliminary approval to permit the use of .22 caliber rimfires to hunt small game, furbearers and crows in the Southeast Special Regulations Area, which is comprised of all of Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Montgomery and Philadelphia counties.

- ◆ Approved designating seven impoundments — a total of 426 acres — as propagation areas on SGL 169 in Cumberland County. The move was recommended because springtime anglers were disturbing nesting birds along the shoreline.

- ◆ Announced the next Commission meeting date as April 5-6 at the agency's Harrisburg headquarters.

NRA hunters tour sets March dates here

The National Rifle Association will bring its 1993 Great American Hunters Tour to two Pennsylvania cities next month. Wilkes-Barre will be the first stop on March 9, followed by Camp Hill on March 10.

The focus of the tour's Northeast leg, of which Pennsylvania is a part, will be on all aspects of hunting, with an emphasis on bowhunting. Nevertheless, subjects will overlap into many areas to provide advanced instruction in hunter safety, ethics and responsibility.

Teams of experts will discuss advanced hunting techniques and share their tips on preseason scouting, tracking, calls and calling and other facets of the sport. Hunters will have the opportunity to meet and ask questions of some of the best-known sportsmen in the nation.

Admission to each clinic is \$10 for NRA members and \$12 for non-members. The clinics will run from 6:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.; doors will open at five o'clock for walk-in registration. To pre-register, call (800) 492-HUNT.

State bowhunters hold convention next month

United Bowhunters of Pennsylvania will hold its first convention at Camp Hill on March 12-14. The event will take place at the Penn Harris Hotel and Convention Center.

The list of speakers includes Dr. Dave Samuel, Gary Alt, Gene and Barry Wensel, Kelly Cooper, and a

number of other bowhunting experts.

The convention will include an exhibit hall with outfitters, manufacturers and retailers, a photo contest, home bowhunting video contest, raffle, banquet and other activities.

For more information, call (215) 947-1510.

1992 Game Commission retirees



Ben Maurer

The following people retired from the Game Commission last year: Ben Maurer, Lebanon, laborer, 1966-92; Rose Isenberg, Harrisburg, clerk typist, 1978-81 & 1981-93; Harry B. Mosier, Albion, laborer, 1969-92; and Lawrence Kuznar, Milford, WCO, 1962-92.

Annotated PA bird checklist on sale now

One of the keys to identifying birds that occur in the state is to know when and where they're likely to appear. The *Annotated Checklist of the Birds of Pennsylvania* by Steve Santner, Dan Brauning, Glenna Schwalbe and Paul Schwalbe gives each species' distinct migration pattern and timing.

The 60-page, 8½x5½ book contains habitat notations, along with seasonal and regional bar graphs that

indicate the relative ease of finding all 368 birds listed for the state. In addition, details are given for birds that have been sighted fewer than 10 times here, and another 47 species are listed in a supplement.

Annotated Checklist of the Birds of Pennsylvania is available from Pennsylvania Birds, 2469 Hammertown Rd., Narvon, PA 17555. The cost is \$5 (tax included) plus \$1 for shipping.

Jefferson County plat book can assist hunters

A plat book, which shows who owns what land in a county, can be a valuable aid for hunters looking for private land access.

The *Jefferson County Land Atlas and Plat Book*, sponsored by the county's 4-H youth program, includes maps of each township, landowners' names, shape and acreage of parcels, and the location of lakes, rivers and roads. It also includes an alphabetical listing of owners, keyed to the section and page of their parcels.

The book sells for \$20. It is a 1989 edition; the next edition is due out in the fall of 1994. Proceeds from book sales are used to purchase education materials and provide programs for youth and volunteer leaders of 4-H/Youth Development Program.

Make checks payable to Jefferson County 4-H Development Fund and mail to 4-H Agent, Cooperative Extension, Jefferson County Service Center, RR 5 Box 47, Brookville, PA 15825-9761.

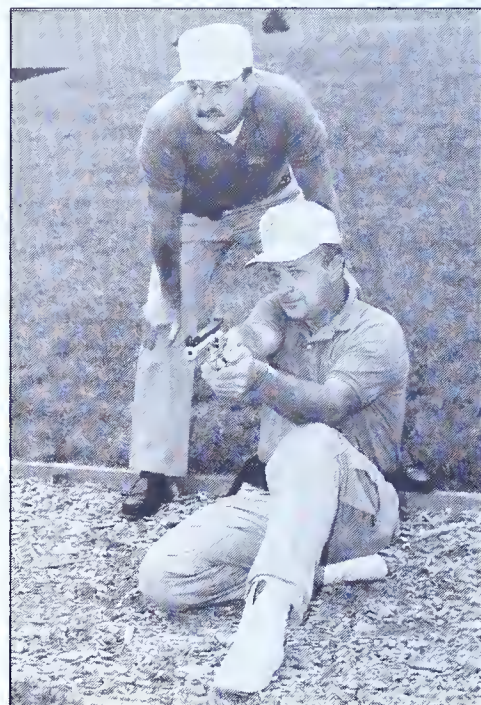
Packard, Littwin win bronzes at 1992 int'l police olympics

Gary Packard and Skip Littwin of the Harrisburg office brought home a team bronze medal from the International Law Enforcement Olympics, held near Washington, DC, last August.

Several hundred officers from as far away as New Zealand, Russia and the United Arab Emirates competed in the match.

Packard and Littwin fired an 1180 out of 1200 to take a bronze in the two-man team, Master Class. Packard also garnered an individual third place in the Expert Class by virtue of a 1463 out of 1500.

Packard and Littwin also captured the two-man team title last year at the PGC revolver championships.



Gary Packard (kneeling) and Skip Littwin

Rules to Hunt By

IN OUR SISTER SPORT, they say, "Stop wishin' and go fishin'." In hunting that translates to something like, "You can't shoot a deer if you're home on the couch." In other words, "Just do it."

To be a successful hunter, the first step is to get up and go outside. That's just one of the lessons many of us have to relearn each year. There may be some whose hunting skills are compiled season by season until they're darn near perfect, but I haven't met any. The rest of us are very human and prone to occasional laziness and forgetfulness. Here are a few words of advice.

"The best time to go hunting is when you have the time." Hunters complain they've only got an hour in the afternoon and have missed the peak periods of wildlife movement at dawn and dusk. So they stay in and watch the football game or the "soaps."

Meanwhile, their neighbor picks up his rifle for 15 minutes after lunch, goes out back, and bags a buck. Deer are always around. It takes only an instant for a shot opportunity, so there's plenty of time no matter how much time you have.

"The best two minutes of the day to hunt are the first and last minutes of legal shooting time." Hunters' optimum shot opportunities are the dim light conditions at daybreak and sunset. Game is just winding down or starting its nightly activities and is likely to be seen by hunters.

Don't sleep in. Get there for that first minute, and don't give up; stay in the



SOMETIMES WE TEND to repeat the same mistakes season in and season out. But when we remember how it's supposed to be done, success smiles on us.

woods until your watch strikes quitting minute.

I nearly missed getting my first bow buck because I almost left the woods five minutes early. I argued myself into staying, and in those last few minutes two bucks appeared. One spotted me and stopped, the other continued past me on the deer trail. I was hidden behind a downed hemlock and arrowed the deer when he went by at less than 10 yards, with two minutes to go.

"Stay ready." Don't allow yourself to get into a position where you can't shoot.

Another View...

by Linda Steiner

Small game hunters are often taught this. Plow through a hawthorn thicket where the spiked limbs keep you bent double, and “Ol’ Ruff” will bust out.

Avoid getting caught like that; leave yourself room to shoot. If it’s necessary to take yourself out of the action to go through gamey cover, keep the time short. Or take turns with a buddy going through the thicket, so one of you is always ready to swing on the bird or rabbit. Or get a hunting dog.

“Don’t let the gun or bow out of your hand.” No matter how uneventful the day is, don’t sling your gun over your shoulder or hang your bow on a limb. Too many hunters have groped in vain for their bow or firearm while an animal slipped by. Chances at game come and go quickly, so don’t miss them. It’s possible to eat lunch with the gun in your lap or crooked over an arm. Sandwiches require only one hand.

“The game’s always watching you.” While in the woods, conduct yourself as if the game, with its keen eyes, ears and nose, is all around you. It just may be.

That means moving slowly and quietly, and hunting into or across the wind. Tromp noisily down the trail, expecting to see no deer, and a buck will bounce out of range — guaranteed. Walk like a buck may be watching you, and you may get a shot.

Once, while squirrel hunting, I scratched absentmindedly on a turkey call. I didn’t expect to see one, but calling was a concession to the fact they were in season. After an hour and no squirrels, I stood up quickly to leave, without looking around. I was met with a sharp, startled “putt!” and turned for a glimpse of a fleeing dark shape. Not one to learn quickly, I made this mistake twice, but only twice.

“Chipmunks can grow antlers.” If a hunter becomes accustomed to the common forest noises, like chipmunks, and ignores them, it’s easy to be caught flat-footed by a buck that walks in from behind.

It’s possible to identify the cadence of different animal movements, but don’t become too complacent with your ability and not turn your head occasionally to check out the source of the sound. It may give you an extra few seconds to get ready for the shot.

“Don’t shoot offhand.” There are lots of rifle rests in the woods — tree trunks, stumps, rocks, logs, knees. Hunting isn’t a shooting game to test steadiness. Because the target is a live animal, the only conscionable thing is to make the most accurate, quickest killing shot possible. To do this, no matter how good a shot you think you are, the steadiest aim will be from a rest.

One of the first deer I shot in antlerless season I owe to a more experienced hunter who was with me. He saw the problem of my wavering offhand stance, grabbed my collar, and pushed me toward a tree trunk. “Lean off that tree, and shoot the deer,” he said. I did, and I did.

“If you think you’re moving too slow, slow down.” A hunting cliché that hits hammer-hard each season. Done correctly, still-hunting’s snail’s pace combines the advantages of staying put and moving around.

Each raising and lowering of the foot is slow and deliberate, and as silent as the fallen leaves will allow. Deer should need to line you up with the proverbial telephone pole to see if you’re moving. You, if all goes well, will see them before that.

“At any given moment, a deer (or any other wild animal) will do exactly what it wants.” Experience and experts can predict what game is likely to do under certain circumstances, but trends don’t necessarily apply to individuals. Expect the unexpected, like deer feeding in the afternoon or disregarding wind direction. Gobblers may come downhill to a call, and squirrels may be jumped in clearcuts. A wise hunter plays the trends but is alert for an animal that doesn’t follow the rules.

“If you think you’re moving too slow, slow down”. . . Done right, still-hunting’s snail’s pace combines the advantages of staying put and moving around.

“Buy all the permits.” Hunting opportunities are precious. Don’t pass them up because you didn’t take the time to get the proper permits or apply before the deadline. Buy that waterfowl stamp on the chance you’ll flush ducks along the creekside when you’re grouse hunting.

Send to a second county for an antlerless license when your first choice is filled. You then have the option of going or staying home, but if you don’t have the permit there is no choice. Compared to

what you’ve already spent on equipment, licenses and permits are cheap.

“Lighten up.” Safety is the only part of hunting that must always be serious. As for the rest, it’s a sport, so it should be fun. So what if you don’t bag anything? At least you had a good time.

A friend of mine learned this final lesson so well he christened his fishing boat with a version of it. Remember, whether you’re afloat or afield, a day spent outdoors “Beats Workin’.”

Fun Games

Who’s Hiding in the Box?

By Connie Mertz

Who is hiding in the nesting boxes? Watch out: One is a misfit.

1. CEERCHS WLO

— — — — — 3 — — — — —

2. DOHOED GAMERRENS

— — — — — — — — — — — — — — — 7

3. CAREMAIN TREESLK

1 — — — — — — — — — — — — — — — 9 — — — — —

4. BRIEVOND

— 11 — — — — — — — — — —

5. MCNIHEY FSWTI

2 — — — — — — — — — — 8 — — — — —

6. TORNNEHR KLIFECR

6 — — — — — — — — — — — — — — — 4 — — — — —

7. ERET WASLOWL

— — — — — — — — — — 5 — — — — —

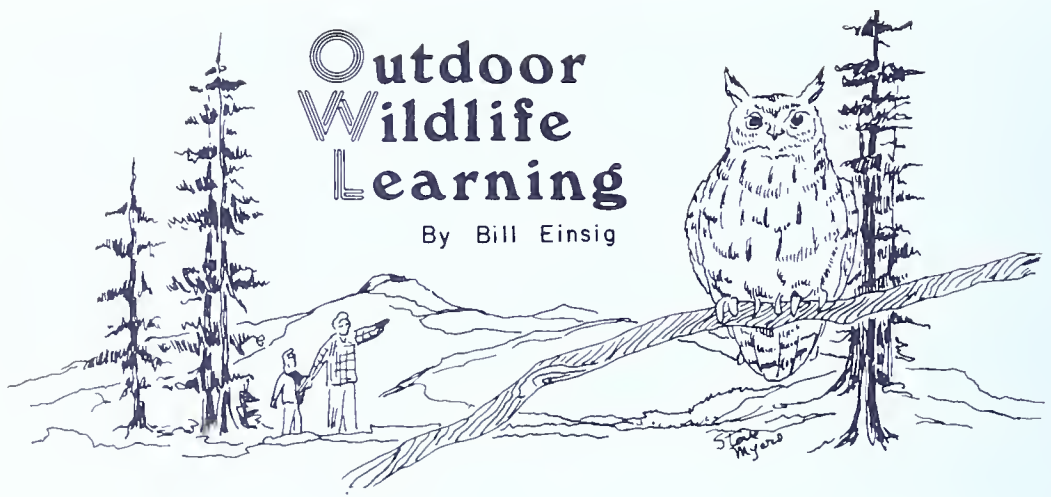
8. DUTTFE SUTOEMIT

— 10 — — — — — — — — — — — — — — —

Which bird is a misfit? _____

Nesting boxes take the place of $\frac{6}{2} \frac{1}{1} \frac{9}{11} \frac{10}{4} \frac{7}{9} \frac{1}{4} \frac{5}{3} \frac{9}{8} \frac{7}{3} \frac{3}{3}$. More than 35 species of birds use them.

answers on p. 64



Sources & Resources

Dear Mr. OWL,

I work at a camp in New York that is considering a daily program for school children. Could you recommend any sources of wildlife-related information we could use? Also, I need directions for building a bluebird house. T. H., Red Hook, NY.

Dear T.H.,

You have an exciting project ahead of you. Working outdoors with youngsters is a great job.

Quite a few sources of outdoor curriculum materials are available for camps like yours. Spend a few hours in a good university or environmental science library close to you. New York has been a leader in nature study and environmental education efforts ever since Anna Botsford Comstock and E. Laurence Palmer pointed the way for generations at Cornell University.

Your own libraries and nature centers will have much to review. Look for program names such as Project Wild, Project Learning Tree, OBIS and Naturescope. More popular books by Joseph Cornell should also be available at a local book store. They are excellent and filled with useful teaching ideas for teachers and parents.

Here's an important source where you'll find most of the information you need: *Science for Children* by the National Science

Resources Center. When I bought my copy it cost \$7.95 from the National Academy Press, 2101 Constitution Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20418. This reference is an annotated bibliography of some of the best material available. Buy it, study it, and request those programs that best match your needs.

As you become familiar with various activities, and focus on your program's objectives, you'll be able to build a full day of exciting hands-on activities. You'll probably develop many ideas to capitalize on your available teaching resources, but you'll never stop looking for that next great idea.

The Game Commission sells a book of plans for building nest boxes, and it includes several for bluebird nesting boxes. *Woodworking for Wildlife* is a great collection of easy projects requiring no special tools and only basic carpentry skills. Even if you find another plan for nest boxes, you'll want this basic reference for all the other information and ideas it contains. Order from the Pennsylvania Game Commission, Dept. MS, 2001 Elmerton Ave., Harrisburg, PA 17110-9797. *Woodworking for Wildlife* costs \$3.

I've been building a basic box with students and teachers for a number of years and while it might not meet the design requirements, it's easy for youngsters to put together and it works. I use a 6-foot 1x6 length of pine and cut five 10-inch pieces for the front

back, sides and top, and a 4-inch piece for the bottom. These are all straight cross-cuts.

Usually I precut the pieces and, because most are exactly the same, kids seldom get confused in putting them together. Use 6d coated sinkers for simplicity and a good grip. Probably most important, drill a 1½-inch entrance hole after the box is assembled.

Do I provide drainage? No. When you see the gaping joints in the box held by a proudly smiling youngster, you won't worry about drainage.

Skunk Smell Eliminator

Some months ago, OWL asked readers to offer their favorite recipes for removing the pungent and persistent smell of skunk from their dogs, clothes and skin. The clear winner was tomato juice. You probably guessed that, but I doubt you could have guessed many of the other unusual concoctions and useful tips offered by helpful readers.

"When our dog was sprayed in the face by a skunk, my son wiped the dog's eyes with a damp handkerchief and carried him home. I used boric acid on the dog's eyes, then washed him with tomato juice followed by a warm bath with baby shampoo. He smelled better when he dried but when his fur became damp you could still smell that skunk." E.P., Shoemakersville.

"Our black labrador, Sam, has had her share of run-ins with skunks, and we've tried the traditional tomato juice bath. It seems to help, but not quite enough. One time, in desperation, I tried giving her a rubdown with baking soda after the bath. There was quite a dust storm when she shook, but it worked. I especially like to use baking soda on her head where it is so hard to wash around her eyes and ears. After Sam's treatment, my own clothes are a bit smelly so I throw baking soda into the washer along with my regular detergent," R.Y., St. Marys.

A quick ramble through some of the books on my shelf turned up a few unusual remedies. One author recommends using ammonia, chloride of lime, bleach or gasoline to remove skunk odor from clothing. Chloride of lime is actually calcium hypochlorite — a type of bleach.

Another writer recommends a combination of detergent, water, bleach and lots of

Roast Wild Turkey with Sausage Dressing

Ingredients:

1 12- to 14-lb. turkey
1 lb. sausage
8 cups stale bread crumbs
2 cups diced celery
1 onion finely chopped
2 tsp. grated orange rind
1/2 tsp. grated lemon rind
salt and pepper
1 tsp. thyme
1/2 tsp. marjoram
1/2 tsp. sage
1/4 cup chopped parsley
1/4 cup orange juice
1/2 cup butter

Wash and dry turkey and season inside with salt. Cook sausage in skillet until brown. Mix sausage with bread cubes and celery. Sauté onion and add to mixture with other above ingredients. Stir in 1/4 cup of sausage fat and stuff into turkey. Close with pins. Roast at 325 degrees about 4½ hours or until tender.

From Pennsylvania Game Cookbook, available from the Game Commission, Dept. MS, 2001 Elmerton Ave., Harrisburg, PA 17110-9797. Cost is \$4 delivered.

elbow grease. Still another mentions old-time trappers would smoke their odoriferous clothes over burning juniper or cedar leaves while using oil of bergamot or oil of citronella to remove, or cover, the smell of skunk on their skin.

Pet shops, dog groomers and veterinarians use commercial preparations designed to deodorize the family pet. It may be simpler, and safer, though not nearly as much fun, to buy one of these and save yourself the trouble of messing with all that tomato juice.

Of course, there is also another view to consider. Mrs. V.P. operates a kennel in West Farmington, OH, with her husband. She loves the smell of skunk and can't understand why anyone would want to get rid of it.

There are many wise men, that have secret hearts, and transparent countenances. — Francis Bacon

WITH PRACTICE, a law enforcement officer can become very effective at ferreting out the truth, simply by observing an individual's facial expressions and body gestures. The ability to read a person while conducting an interview is a tremendous asset to an investigator and often brings a successful conclusion to a case.

I remember two incidents in Montgomery County where individuals tried to deceive me. One episode occurred during the 1977 antlerless deer season; I received a call about a man named Jimmy Slipshod, who was attempting to kill a second deer.

The informant said Slipshod had killed a buck during archery season on a farm in Upper Dublin Township and was back there hunting for doe. In those days a hunter was allowed to take only one deer per season.

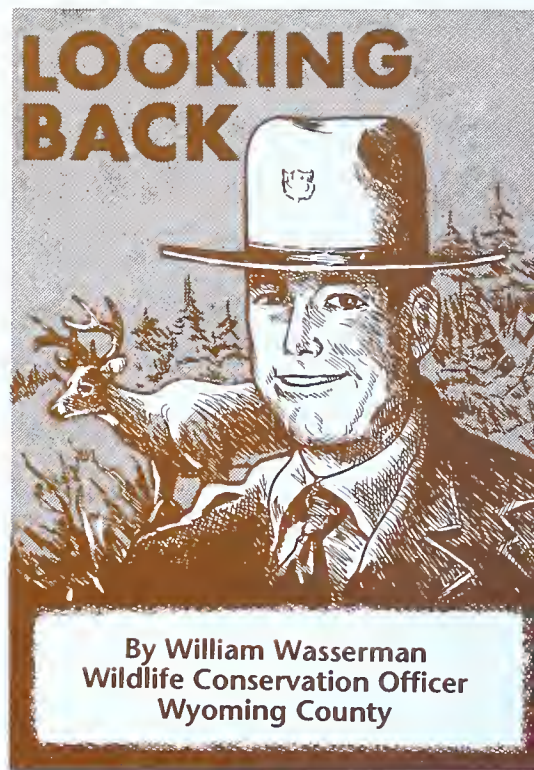
Montgomery County is highly urbanized, with a population of about 800,000 people. Although much of the land consists of housing developments and industrial complexes, a few farms remain.

The county has a sizable deer population, but the trick to successful hunting is gaining access to some of the large estates that make up much of the area. Apparently Slipshod had access to a particular farm, and was taking full advantage of his good fortune.

It took 30 minutes for me to reach the farm, which consisted primarily of reverting fields mixed with thick brush and small wooded areas. I could see a man hunting approximately 100 yards away and walked over to him.

"State conservation officer," I said. "How's the hunting today?"

"Don't you have anything better to do than traipse out here and ruin my hunt?" the man growled. He was in his late 20s to early 30s. He was clean shaven and had short, jet-black hair and a thin wisp of a mustache. His narrow



frame suggested a weight of perhaps 160 pounds.

"Are you Jim Slipshod?" I asked.

"Yeah. Why?" he asked, with an ugly edge in his voice.

His attitude was abrasive and I found no reason to explain my motives. "I'd like to see your hunting license," I said.

"You should be out catching poachers — not harassing honest hunters like me," he snapped while turning around.

I removed his license from its plastic holder and checked it carefully. The big game tag, although still attached to the license, had previously been filled out in pencil and erased. Even the time, 6:10 p.m., could be seen.

"It looks like you already killed a deer," I told him. "You shouldn't be hunting today."

"What are you talking about? I didn't kill any deer," Slipshod retorted while turning to face me.

"You didn't do a very good job of erasing your tag. I can still see where you wrote three points for each antler."

"That wasn't me," declared Slipshod. "My kids did that. They were playing with it the other day."

I was astonished that he expected me to believe the story, and sickened that he would attempt to involve his children. "I have reliable information that you killed a deer in archery season," I cautioned him. "It would be best to cooperate with me and stop playing around."

"I'm a police officer — I know about the law," he barked. "If you think I killed a deer you'll just have to prove it."

Talking any further seemed useless. I seized his hunting license and firearm for evidence and radioed Deputy Tom Scarpello. I asked him to contact some local deer processors to find out if any remembered butchering Slipshod's first deer.

I thought it would be a good idea to speak with the landowner, so I drove to the house and knocked on the front door.

Within a few seconds an elderly woman appeared and eyed me uneasily. I explained that I was investigating the possibility of unlawful hunting and asked if she knew anything about Slipshod killing a deer on her property a couple months earlier.

With ice-blue eyes staring right through me, the woman denied knowing about Slipshod's deer. I also noticed her hands were clasped tightly together while a crooked thumb shifted nervously over pallid knuckles. I was beginning to feel like I'd hit a dead-end when her brother stepped into the doorway beside her.

"Excuse me for interrupting, officer," the man broke in. "I couldn't help overhearing your conversation with my sister. The gentleman you speak of most certainly killed a deer here this fall; he thanked us profusely for allowing him to hunt on our land. Don't you remember, Helen? Why, he even came back later with some venison. Surely you remember that."

"Oh." His sister exclaimed. "The

nice policeman who hunted here. Now I remember." She whipped her head toward her brother and glared at him scornfully, causing him to excuse himself quickly from the doorway.

Although I didn't think she or her brother would help in a court case, their information would be valuable as a lever against Slipshod. The woman was becoming quite anxious about my presence, so I thanked her and returned to my patrol car.

While I was talking with the landowners, Deputy Scarpello learned that Slipshod's first deer had been butchered at Spike's Meats in Oreland, so I drove out and talked to Spike. He indeed remembered cutting up Slipshod's deer.

Later that night I telephoned Slipshod. His attitude mellowed when he realized the debt was stacked against him, and he said he'd pay his fine within two weeks.

Slipshod kept his word but still felt compelled to lie when he met with me to pay his fine, saying he was after a second deer because he couldn't find his first until the day after he shot it. He claimed much of it had been eaten by foxes.

Even if true, it was no excuse to violate the law. Nevertheless, Slipshod thought he had to give me a reason just the same.

After he left, I telephoned Spike, who told me Slipshod's deer hadn't so much as a tooth mark in it.

That same year I ran into another poacher I'll never forget. It was 2 p.m. Thanksgiving Day, and I'd been on patrol since early morning with Deputy Waterways Conservation Officer Bob McConnell.

We stopped near Collegeville and met Deputies Ed Lays and Rudy Nerlinger to discuss an investigation they were working. A man pulled up in a pickup and told us he saw someone shoot a deer.

"Hey," he cried in a high-pitched tone. "Am I glad I bumped into you guys." He was in his 20s, had red hair

and a face full of freckles.

"What can we do for you?" I asked.

"Deer season isn't open yet, or anything like that — is it?"

"Not until Monday," I replied. "Why?"

"I saw my neighbor shoot a deer this morning," he blurted out. "I was hunting pheasants when he ran out of his house, dressed in long underwear. I think it was a buck. Last I looked he was dragging it toward his barn."

The young man suddenly appeared nervous. "I know him pretty well. Don't tell him I said anything. Okay?"

"We'll leave you out of this," I assured him. "But we need more information before we can do anything. What's the man's name?"

The freckled informant studied us painfully — uncertain whether to continue.

"Did your neighbor see you this morning?" I urged.

"No, I don't think so," he muttered.

"Then he'll never know you spoke to us. You have my word on it."

The young man looked at me intently. "Okay," he sighed. "They call him Roco the Bull. He's not somebody you want mad at you; his real name is Roco Fontana."

From there we learned where Roco lived and got a good description of his house, barn, outbuildings and property, including where the deer had been killed.

I drove to Roco's with McConnell; Lays and Nerlinger followed. I didn't want all four of us approaching the house together, so I instructed Ed and Rudy to wait, while McConnell and I went to the door.

As I neared the front porch, everything seemed to look quite normal. There was no deer hair or blood visible; no drag marks — nothing.

But when I knocked on the door, things began to change abruptly. I could hear people talking excitedly inside. Suddenly I heard the frenzied thrashing of feet, coupled with the sound of furniture being moved, and



Question

May I sell the antlers from a legally killed buck?

Answer

Yes. The original owner may sell any inedible parts of game or wildlife within 90 days after the close of the season in which it was legally taken.

something large, like a pot, crashing to the floor. I knocked again, louder.

"State game commission." I announced.

As quickly as the clamor began, it suddenly ceased. The front door burst open and a tall, burly man with yard-wide shoulders and balding head stood before us. Although it was quite cold, he was dressed in blue jeans and a V-neck T-shirt — dense, black hair protruded from its opening. He was in his mid-50s, but his thickly muscled body belied his age. I could see why he was called the Bull.

"We're state conservation officers," informed him. "We want to speak to you about the deer you shot this morning."

"I don't know what you're talking about. I didn't shoot any deer," he protested.

I told Roco we had reliable information that a deer had been shot on his property earlier and that the poacher fit his description.

"I don't know anything about a deer being shot on my land," he assured us.

Deputy McConnell had been eyeing Roco carefully. "Why do you have blood stains on your shoes and pant legs, sir?"

"Deer season is closed," I added.

"You can invite us in or we'll get a search warrant. It's up to you."

"Okay, you're right. I have a deer inside," he sighed. "Want to see it?"

"I'm afraid we'll have to, sir," I replied.

"C'mon in," Roco groaned, and stepped into his house.

McConnell and I followed Roco inside. The front door led directly into his kitchen and we discovered deer parts scattered everywhere: a huge pile of venison, cut and wrapped in white freezer paper, was stacked on the kitchen table, each package carefully marked.

The gray tile floor was spattered with crimson gore, and the kitchen sink was covered in thick gobs of dried blood. A sloppy heap of deer lungs dangled over the counter to the left of the sink, while a solitary pot of venison chunks boiled furiously upon the stove. To my right, a rumpled bag of deer bones and fat had been dumped in a corner.

Roco signed a consent-search form and gave me a full written statement, but he claimed he watched someone else shoot the deer while upstairs in the bathroom. He said the deer staggered onto his land from the south side, shortly after he heard a gunshot, and died.

Roco left the deer lay for an hour, and since nobody claimed it he took it, butchered the carcass, buried the head and hide in his back field, and hid the antlers in his barn.

I stepped outside and instructed Deputies Lays and Nerlinger to retrieve the head, hide and rack while McConnell and I finished up inside.

Everything seemed to be going well until I apprised them of the penalty. Roco's wife, standing by the kitchen table, suddenly turned white. She clutched her chest and began breathing in shallow, rapid gasps, mumbling something about her heart.

Roco lunged forward, pulling open a drawer crammed with medicine. He grabbed a small, brown bottle, wrenched open the lid, and shook two



"We Need Wildlife" is a message more people need to realize and appreciate if the future of our wildlife resources is to be ensured. To help promote that theme, the Game Commission has produced a new patch featuring a cardinal resting on a dogwood sprig. The 3-inch full color patch costs \$3 each, delivered, and may be ordered from the Pennsylvania Game Commission, Dept. MS, 2001 Elmerton Ave., Harrisburg, PA 17110-9797.

tiny pills into his meaty palm. Then, as he gently placed them on his wife's lips, she swallowed the medication without water.

Within a few minutes her color began to return. I offered to take them to the nearest hospital. They declined.

There was no need to stay any longer, so Deputy McConnell and I gathered the illegal venison and put it in my patrol vehicle, along with the evidence seized by Lays and Nerlinger.

Roco paid his fine a week later but, like Jimmy Slipshod, continued to live his lie. Roco couldn't have seen a deer enter his property from the south, while in his bathroom as he claimed, because the only window was facing north.

Those who follow a path of deception travel a precarious course. It ultimately leads them into a mire of subterfuge and misdirection from which they can't escape. Each lie begets another, and in the end the burden engulfs them.

The Art of Snowshoes

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO I became the proud owner of a pair of genuine, handmade snowshoes. During the five years I lived on a Maine farm with my husband and small sons, snowshoes were a necessity, not a luxury, because with all the will in the world, it was impossible to wade through chest-high snow. Then, as now, I needed to be outside exploring the natural world in all seasons, and a pair of snowshoes was my admission ticket to central Maine's snowbound swamps and forests.

My snowshoes were specially made for me by a master craftsman, W. E. York of Caratunk. Because I wanted to use them in the woods, York recommended his most popular design—the modified bearpaw, which is oval-shaped with a stubby, squared-off tail.

Even then, factory-made snowshoes were gaining favor, but York sniffed at the newfangled magnesium or plastic frames and nylon webbings coated with neoprene. His snowshoes still had white ash frames, rawhide webbings and leather bindings.

A winter afternoon in York's woodstove-heated workroom was an education in fine craftsmanship, and we listened respectfully as he explained the step-by-step process he followed every time he made a pair, from his selection of the best ash trees to the construction of the leather bindings.

York was engaged in producing one of

North America's oldest forms of transportation. Historians believe that the first device used to extend the human foot for easier snow travel originated in Central Asia about 4000 B.C.

Such devices enabled aboriginal people to move farther north into Scandinavia and Siberia, and also into North America via the Bering Strait land bridge. That bridge became the dividing line between ski and snowshoe users.

The people who moved into northern Asia perfected skis, while in North America the Athapascan Indians in the West and the Algonquins in the East became the greatest snowshoe designers, introducing hundreds of variants depending on weather conditions. Snowshoes enabled them to move quickly over the snow in pursuit of large nomadic game animals such as buffalo, which tended to flounder in deep snow.

Pennsylvania formed the southern boundary of snowshoe use, and both the Delaware and the Susquehannock utilized them. Tradition has it that the town of Snow Shoe in Centre County, formerly Snow Shoe Camp, honored the experience of a party of white hunters who, overtaken by a snowstorm in the area, constructed their own snowshoes and made it into the Bald Eagle settlement. More likely, though, according to historian D. Zeisberger, the town was named for a snowshoe found hanging in a tree in what was once an Indian camp.

The first white

By Marcia Bonta



The Naturalist's Eye

people to adopt snowshoes in North America were the French in Canada who, along with their Indian allies, later used them as a tactical aid for making quick raids on British settlements during the French and Indian Wars. Their successes forced the British to become adept snowshoers. From that point on, the English colonies and, later, the newly formed United States routinely equipped their militias with snowshoes.

Trappers, hunters, explorers and surveyors also considered snowshoes indispensable for moving efficiently over heavy snow cover. Many made their own, based on Indian designs.

Just for Fun

Recreational snowshoeing is also first attributed to the French Canadians in Quebec, who started snowshoe clubs more than 200 years ago. Originally they organized snowshoe races to train military men, but gradually they became civilian organizations with colorful uniforms and sashes identifying their districts.

These clubs evolved into the Canadian Snowshoer's Union, which is the largest snowshoe organization in the world and still promotes snowshoe racing. Not to be outdone, Americans formed the American Snowshoe Union centered in Lewiston, ME.

Most appealing of all, at least to me, were the snowshoe hikes held in New England villages until the early 1930s. Family groups of from 30 to 100 people participated, and a committee planned a secret trail that would end at a farm where the owners had been previously contacted and paid to provide a hearty meal of home-made soup, sandwiches, biscuits, doughnuts, cider and coffee.

Afterwards, the snowshoers took a different route back over a hill so they could do some snowshoe sliding by placing one foot in front of the other. Such outings occurred once a week throughout the winter if conditions were right.

I didn't know any of this history when I bought my snowshoes from York. My major concern was whether an unathletic klutz like me could master the sport. I

buckled the snowshoes over my high-topped leather boots and started walking. And that was it. It was as easy as walking, especially with a light crust on the snow.

Once I owned snowshoes, winter became my favorite season in Maine. I snowshoed for miles over areas that were often impenetrable or inaccessible during the other seasons: swamps where the white-tailed deer yarded up or the far coves of a nearby lake.

I frequently loaded up our toboggan with a picnic lunch, a thermos of cocoa, and my small sons and pulled them for miles over the frozen, snow-covered lake. If the wind was still, the sky blue and the sun bright, we were warm and filled with the adventure of a winter picnic on an isolated Maine lake. Such memories my snowshoes have given me.

Then we moved to central Pennsylvania. At first it almost seemed like Maine, except winter came later. Not until February stormed in was I able to haul out my snowshoes.

The "big snow" that fell on Feb. 18, 1971, sealed us in for five days. Twenty-two inches had fallen, an average storm by Maine standards, but the biggest blizzard in 10 years in our area. And, as it turned out, the biggest storm we have ever experienced during our 21 years here.

I had, in effect, less than a month of snowshoeing before the snow melted and that was it for the winter. Since then, the opportunities for snowshoeing have been intermittent at best, and nearly always occur sometime in February. But I take any chance I can get, often



using them when the snow cover is less than a foot deep. Snowshoes keep me from breaking through the several layers of thawed and refrozen snow and ice that result after a series of small snows and wildly vacillating temperatures.

But even using every possible excuse to break out my snowshoes, the warming trend over the last decade has produced many snowshoe-less winters. Last year, it wasn't until early spring that I had my chance. After a nearly snow-free winter, a series of small snowstorms in mid-March accumulated 18 inches of snow.

On March 22, while snow still poured from the sky, my husband and I strapped on our snowshoes and headed up the First Field Trail over the virgin snow cover. The first and only sound we heard was a gobbling turkey. We could scarcely believe it, but we found his tracks in the snow, evidence that our ears had not deceived us. That turkey, it turned out, was the only creature out and about except for us.

But by the following morning, it was 17 degrees and clear. I was out early to look for more tracks. I found them, too — a few squirrel, the fresh, deep furrows of a porcupine and deer tracks everywhere.

Then four deer below the Far Field Road snorted and ran off, leaving three deep holes they had dug in search of food. The black dirt was thoroughly churned up and all roots, dead leaves and greenery consumed. Next I spotted ruffed grouse tracks and surprised one roosting in the laurel, but it erupted in a flurry before I could react.

I snowshoed for miles, arms swinging freely, moving easily through the deep woods and up and down slopes, searching for dens and identifying the occupants by telltale tracks. A porcupine was snugly tucked in an enormous, hollow, black oak tree — the same den it had occupied the previous winter.

One hole under a tree root in the woods had fox tracks going in and out of it. But those in the fields where the snow had drifted were still closed, and I guessed they were mostly occupied by snoozing woodchucks.

The following morning it was still clear



and cold. That day I snowshoed down the middle of our mile-and-a-half, private access Plummers Hollow Road. I found the hemlock treetops full of twittering, fluttering, golden-crowned kinglets. Along the streambank, winter wrens foraged. Although the stream was not frozen, icicles hung from fallen logs and exposed tree limbs, and rhododendron leaves curled in the cold. Surely this was mid-January, not late March.

Then, as I snowshoed back up the road, I spotted an animal running down the left tire track straight toward me. It was a striped skunk, its nose to the ground and moving fast. To my right was the steep mountainside, to my left the steep road bank that dropped straight down to the stream.

There was no way, even with snowshoes, that I could step more than a couple feet to the side to let the skunk past. I knew that the road was only eight feet wide. I also knew that skunks can spray 10 feet.

So first I stood my ground and yelled, "Hey, skunk!" but it kept on coming as if it hadn't heard me, a likely possibility

because skunks do not hear very well. They also have poorly developed sight and smell. When I have met them in better circumstances, I always stand respectfully aside and watch them amble along (their usual gait) at a safe distance. But this skunk was galloping.

Throwing dignity to the winds, I turned around and ran several hundred yards down the road, keeping well ahead of the skunk and hoping to reach the one large pull-off on the road before the skunk caught up. Finally I paused and looked behind me. The skunk had disappeared. I cautiously retraced my steps and found where it had veered out of the track and clambered up the mountainside.

In all my years on snowshoes, I had never tried racing, but that skunk had been a terrific motivator. Still, I don't think I am ready to join the Snowshoe Union. For me, snowshoeing will remain a pleasant way to navigate in a winter woods, to read sign and follow animal tracks, to remain a participant in the season along with the wild animals that are abroad no matter what the weather.

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Nocks

By Keith C. Schuyler

WHAT MAY appear as the most insignificant archery component can actually be the most important. An improper arrow nock, its alignment, or its match to the string can quickly nullify the effects of otherwise finely tuned equipment.

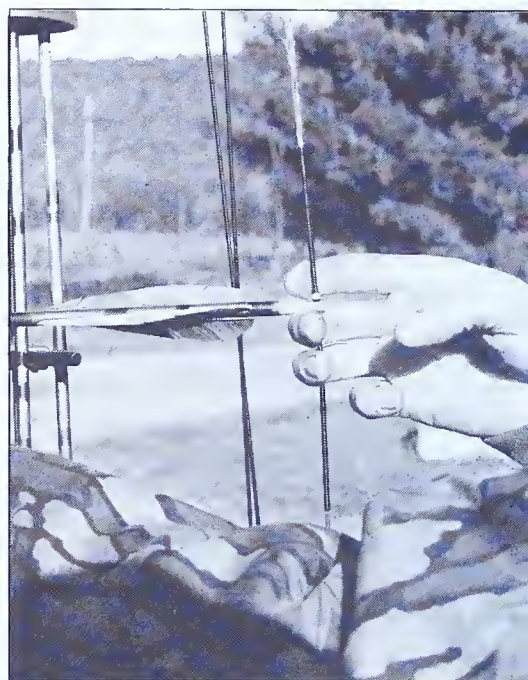
Although primitive archers were more or less satisfied just to get the arrow away from the string on release, today's bowmen are increasingly fastidious about nocks — and well they should be.

Basically, the arrow nock is a slit that fits over the bowstring. Early archers, including American Indians, merely cut a slot in the fletching end of the shaft. Ancient English arrows were made with the nock end thicker than the main shaft to provide more wood to fashion and protect the nock slit. Turks made a wooden nock with a narrow entrance to an open throat so an arrow would stay on the string while the archer was on horseback.

As archery became more sophisticated, a wedge of bone or horn was glued into a slot in the shaft and a slit was cut into the wedge. Later, tough fiber was substituted. In more recent times, nocks were made from aluminum (as early as 1908), hard rubber and Bakelite.

Modern plastics provide the ideal material for arrow nocks. Today's nocks are durable and can be manufactured in any shape imaginable. Some slot tips are enlarged sufficiently on the inside or are inwardly slanted to hold the arrow on the string without sacrificing throat size.

The first plastic nocks were molded



ALTHOUGH IT'S NOT the first piece of equipment that comes to mind, the arrow nock is a vital component to any bow and arrow.

with a straight slit much like the ancient nocks. Some of us, however, learned to heat such nocks in hot water and then, while the plastic was still soft, stroke the ends together with thumb and forefinger so they would hold the arrow on the string. This was imperfect but practical.

Later, and what proved to be especially valuable to hunters, was a raised projection on the nock, 90 degrees to the string slit. By merely feeling with his thumb, a hunter could place an arrow properly on the string without taking his eyes off the quarry.

In my early days, we often used a buildup of waxed dental floss or tape, carefully wrapped and molded to the string by the heat from a match or lighter. While the locator was still warm, it was further molded by rolling it between the thumb and forefinger.

Even if the fit was a bit snug, repeated shots soon developed an easy-to-find and practical arrow nock locator. This system is still used by some who shoot longbows or recurves. It is not too practical on modern strings that have a serving on the nock locator area.



The old dental tape application can still be used on served strings to provide a locator or stop for the arrow nock. Simply build one or more narrow bands thick enough to stop travel on the string.

A better substitute is one or more metal nocking points, such as Saunders' original Nok Set, which has a soft inner lining to protect the string or string serving. These are applied with a special set of pliers, which can also be used to remove the nocking point for relocation or replacement.

The Cushion Nok-Point by Tru Fire incorporates a softer cushion button that is held in place by a conventional brass nock clamp. It prevents contact between the arrow nock and the metal clamp, which might cause scratching or damage to the nock, and it lessens the possibility of finger pinching.

Two recent developments in nocks includes Easton's Super Nock Components for aluminum arrows and TailFire Lighted Arrow Nock by Systemsports.

Seventy years of experience are behind Easton's new approach to providing positive alignment for arrow nocks. Under the trademark UNI (Universal Nock Installation) a special metal bushing fits into the fletching end of an aluminum arrow. Into this fits a specially designed polycarbonate nock with a five-pound grip for a standard bowstring. A raised index or ridge on the nock serves to provide a catch for a special plastic tool that seats the nock inside the bushing.

It also can be set to locate the cock feather by feel in a hunting situation. Because of close tolerances, the nock doesn't need to be glued in place. Conventional nocks may be used with an insert

that can be fitted into Easton's bushing. A new XX78 shaft can be ordered with the new nock components installed.

The TailFire Lighted Arrow Nock by Systemsports is a battery-operated system that lights the nock for marking a hit or for locating the arrow after a miss. The light is activated by arrow release and is deactivated by tapping the nock on a hard surface. The lithium battery has a shelf life of eight years and should last for one year in normal use. If unattended, the battery should last more than 36 hours.

Whether to use one or two nock locators on the string serving is a matter of personal choice. Two nocks provide a more positive positioning of the arrow nock, which is important to hunters. But they should be installed with caution on string servings of compound bows.

Because most compound bows are relatively short compared to traditional bows, the angle of the string is more acute. Consequently, if two locators are spaced such that they merely accommodate the arrow nock when the string is at rest, they will pinch the nock when the string is at full draw, whether fingers or a release is used.

Where should you place the arrow nock locator?

Some fine-tuning is necessary, but your bow does have a preferred position for the arrows you shoot. A good starting place is to have your arrow nock sitting 3/8-inch above the level of your arrow on the rest. If you have trouble with vertical performance, assuming that you are shooting from the valley on a compound bow, lowering the nock might help.

A calibrated bow square will help determine where to begin measuring. A folded newspaper or magazine will work, too.

How tight should the nock be on the string?

If it's too tight, the fletched end of the arrow may tip upon release. If it's

SOME POPULAR NOCKS: Pro Nock (left) is chosen by many target shooters; Arizona Plastinock is used by target archers and hunters; and the American Bjorn, is an old favorite.





too loose, there can be a tiny lateral error at release that is greatly magnified downrange. A sloppy fit can cause the arrow to slide up and down the string or to fall off completely — embarrassing on the target line, potentially ruinous when hunting.

The time-honored method of testing for proper fit is to let the nocked arrow hang freely from the string at the nocking point. If more than a slight jar dislodges the arrow from the string, the nock may be too tight or the nocking point is too fat.

Another test is to apply thumb pressure to the throat end of the nock when holding the static string with two fingers. The nock should release with slight pressure.

In most instances, the throat or string slit in the nock is located so the cock feather (or vane) of the arrow sits at a right angle to the string. However, if the fletching brushes the arrow rest on release, the nock might have to be rotated. For that reason, some dealers don't permanently affix nocks to the arrows, leaving it to the buyer who might want to change them. Some modern arrow rests require a vertical cock fletch.

The arrow nock must be nearly perfectly aligned with the shaft. On new inserts, or on properly formed wooden shafts, careful application of adhesive or cement should provide a satisfactory fit. Rotating the nock into position should

THE TIME-HONORED method of testing proper nock fit is to let the arrow hang freely from the string. It should take only a slight jar to dislodge it.

press out excessive material to make proper union.

When replacing a nock, it's important to remove any adhesive residue that might cause nock/shaft misalignment. Rather than cutting away the old nock, it is best to dip it into boiling water or apply dry heat to remove all traces of adhesive and bits of the old nock. The new nock should be carefully checked for alignment by rolling the shaft on a level surface or by using a nock alignment jig.

Nocks do become damaged when they're hit by another arrow, so they must be checked occasionally. If you suspect a nock has been hit, or if the arrow goes beyond the target, inspect it immediately.

Failure of a nock at release can be dangerous. It may result in a "dry fire" that can damage the bow. Worse, it may send the arrow far wide of the target and risk injuring anyone not behind the point of release. This is reason enough to insist that no one go forward of the firing line.

Many years ago, I was involved in the filming of an archery deer hunt. I was the archer, and as luck would have it, as a dozen other deer pounded past, a buck stopped exactly where I had anticipated.

At a range of only 15 yards, however, my shot was about 18 inches high, inflicting what proved to be a superficial hit. Chagrined at my performance, I couldn't understand why I'd missed so badly until I retrieved my arrow — one side of the nock was completely broken.

There were two fortunate outcomes of this situation. The buck, which had distinctive antlers, was seen several weeks later, apparently healthy. And the person doing the filming was so unnerved by the other deer passing by the blind, that he failed to film my performance.

Today's nocks are much better, making it highly unlikely that such an occurrence would ever happen again. Nonetheless, although many archers may take them for granted, nocks represent an important link between the bow and the arrow.

Shooting Aids For '93

By Don Lewis

Photos by Helen Lewis

IT WAS JUST 15 minutes until lunch, but I wanted to chronograph a load for a .240 Gibbs. My chronograph was about 75 yards from my shop, and carrying all my shooting gear in one trip is a hassle. I usually leave something behind and, sure enough, this time I forgot my shooting muffs. I was in a hurry, though, so I started to shoot anyway.

After several rounds, my ears began to ring, but I kept shooting. The ringing got louder and soon my ears began to hurt. While contemplating another shot, a hand gripped my shoulder. It was my youngest son, Tim. He said something about lunch being ready, but his voice was garbled and sounded a mile away. He talked while we walked to the house, but I heard very little.

60% Hearing Loss

It was nearly an hour before I could hear normal conversation, and from that day on my hearing has steadily gone downhill. Today I have about 60 percent hearing loss in both ears.

My hearing problem didn't begin that day. I fired hundreds of rounds in the military without any ear protection. When I first began operating a sight-in range, I seldom wore ear covers. It never occurred to me to wear ear plugs when hunting. Today, I take every precaution — even though it's too late.

While we're all now aware of the dangers of loud noises and the importance of hearing protection, conventional plugs and muffs aren't practical for most hunting. Fortunately, new technologies are getting around the problem.

Walker's Game Ear is a miniaturized



BOB WALKER holds his company's Game Ear, a hearing enhancement and safety device that is ideal for shooters and is also useful for bird watchers, photographers and other outdoorsmen.

sound amplification device. It includes a safety circuit that automatically shuts out noise levels above 110 decibels (a .22 rimfire generates 130 dB). It's also designed with a high frequency microphone that helps to distinguish the sounds of crunching leaves and snapping twigs, for example.

The Game Ear is not just for the hearing impaired; the tiny unit (it weighs 0.16 ounce) is a hearing enhancement and safety device ideal for hunters, bird watchers and outdoor photographers. It allows a hunter to shoot without endangering his or her hearing. It's ideal for range officers, claybird fans and competitive shooters, too. It's so small and easy to wear I soon forgot I had it on.





JIM SHAW, left, uses the MTM Portable Maintenance Center. Made primarily of tough plastic, this unit consists of a compartment for tools and cleaning equipment, and rubber lined forks for holding a rifle or shotgun for cleaning. Note here that the rod guide has been pulled out for photographic purposes. The Les Baer Custom Bipod shown at right features a vertical rod that allows convenient placement both on the bench and in the field.

The Game Ear is not a hearing aid, although it looks like one. The one-piece unit fits behind either ear, much like a regular hearing aid, and has a flexible plastic tube with a soft plug that fits in the ear. Simply install a conventional shooting plug in one ear and the Game Ear in the other. Set the volume control at a comfortable level, and woods sounds will be distinct and clear.

Because it automatically suppresses harmful noises, there's no need to shut it off when shooting. The company says the product has been thoroughly tested and endorsed by such notable outdoorsmen as Paul Butski, Len Lee Rue, Grits Gresham, Wayne Carlton and the late Ben Rogers Lee.

It sells for \$173 (postage and handling included) plus applicable state sales taxes. For more information, write Walker's Game Ear, P.O. Box 1069, Media, PA 19063, or call (215) 565-8952.

Last year I had to reload 2,000 .223 shells for a Nebraska prairie dog hunt with rifle builder Jim Peightal and my two sons. Because my sons have full-time jobs, I agreed to load all the shells for the Lewis clan.

Jay Postman of RCBS saved the day by consigning an RCBS AmmoMaster-Auto five-station, progressive press for testing. It came with a RCBS Uniflow powder measure. Dies and five-station shell plates (numbered the same as standard RCBS shell holders) must be ordered separately.

The AmmoMaster features automatic indexing, priming, powder charging and loaded-round ejection. Because the AmmoMaster takes standard 7/8 x 14 reloading dies, a person can use other dies or switch calibers quickly.

AmmoMaster also has a unique case detection system that disengages the powder measure when no case is present in the powder charging station. This system eliminates the possibility of inadvertently spilling a charge and still allows the reloader to use the Uniflow powder measure.

Bridging (powder sticking in the drop tube) is always a problem when using stick powders in progressive presses, and that's why I recommend ball powder for progressives whenever possible. The AmmoMaster has a clear powder measure adapter that enables the reloader to spot sticking powder before a light charge is dropped. A light tap on the clear adapter will dislodge the bridged powder. I experienced no bridging, however, when loading the 2,000 rounds we used for the prairie dog hunt.

For the test, I also receive a lubricating/decapping die and a powder checker die. When I installed them, I could see the potential for the lubricating/decapping die, but I had reservations about the powder checker die. My suspicions were unfounded. It worked to perfection and eliminated the fear of having an uncharged case.

The powder checker die incorporates a solid 3-inch rod that screws into the top of the die. A sliding rod is pushed up alongside the solid rod when the charged case goes into the powder checker die. A white



rubber O-ring is placed on the solid rod at the highest point the sliding rod reaches when the charged case is fully inserted.

To set the O-ring, pour a correct charge of powder into a primed case and push the case into the power checker die. With the case fully inserted, adjust the O-ring level with the top of the sliding rod. From there, it's just a matter of watching the sliding rod. If it goes higher or doesn't reach the O-ring, the powder charge is not correct. I'm not saying it will spot a half grain or maybe even a grain, but I found it will indicate significant changes.

Admittedly, there were minor problems with the AmmoMaster. For awhile, I failed to seat the primers properly. It's important to develop the ability to feel a primer being seated. In another instance, I ran out of primers. When the last primer is used, a primer follower pin locks the primer transfer bar. But I failed to see that the transfer bar wasn't picking up a primer.

It takes a bit of time to get things running smoothly. The AmmoMaster is a

production press not designed primarily for speed. Without hurrying, I comfortably loaded 100 rounds in roughly 20 minutes. I'm convinced the AmmoMaster is a high quality press. In fact, it comes close to being a miniature reloading factory.

We knew there would be plenty of bore cleaning on the prairie dog hunt, and cleaning a rifle in the field is not easy. We solved the problem with an MTM Portable Maintenance Center. This heavy plastic tray is compartmentalized for storage of gun cleaning equipment, tools and gun forks. It has sliding see-through dust covers. A tough plastic gun fork with a thick rubber liner fits in each end of the tray. The rubber-lined forks secure a rifle for cleaning.

Placing the tray on the top of Peightal's haul trailer made it easy to brush and swab the bores. The MTM takes a lot of the hassle out of rifle cleaning.

I have an uncanny knack for bumping or knocking over spotting scopes. When I discovered the stability of Les Baer Custom's improved model of the Freeland Regal Bipod, I knew this was the spotting scope stand to take to Nebraska. Because I'd be using a long eye-relief spotting scope, I used Baer's zoom adapter instead of the saddle and strap setup.

The bipod has a vertical rod that allows the spotting scope to be raised and lowered. The head of the bipod has an adjusting screw for making minor adjustments in elevation. A lock ring and screw on the vertical rod holds the head at any desired height. By loosening the head locking screw, the spotting scope can be rotated on the rod.

Les Baer's new bipod is a true combination of function, stability and craftsmanship. It's not just another scope stand.

Commission 800 Numbers

Within Pennsylvania, use the agency's toll-free 800 numbers to contact a wildlife conservation officer. For the Northwest Region, call (800) 533-6764; Southwest, (800) 243-8519; Northcentral, (800) 422-7551; Southcentral, (800) 422-7554; Northeast, (800) 228-0789; and Southeast (800) 228-0791. Phones will be manned around the clock during the major hunting seasons, and about 15 hours a day at other times.

In the wind

j. scott rupp



A Connecticut paper products manufacturer found guilty of dumping carbon disulfide into the Connecticut River has been fined \$13 million. The National Wildlife Federation reports it is the largest penalty so far assessed under the Clean Water Act. The Dexter Corp. pleaded guilty to eight felony counts for discharging the hazardous substance, which contains arsenic and cyanide. The company was fined \$4 million in criminal penalties and \$9 million in civil penalties.

Last year saw the endangered whooping crane take its biggest comeback stride to date. Improved nesting conditions resulted in a record 40 pairs hatching an estimated 35 young. With 15 to 20 chicks surviving, 145 cranes made their annual migration, compared to 132 in 1991. The whooping crane population numbered only 16 birds in the 1940s; the total population now stands at about 250 — a figure that includes captive breeding birds.

Bruce Miller of Mound, MN, won the 42nd annual federal duck stamp contest with his rendering of a pair of canvasbacks. Miller's painting was chosen for the 1993-94 Federal Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp from among 600 entries. Funds from the stamp are used by the federal government to improve wildlife habitat and finance waterfowl research.

A Texas firm's asphalt recycling process is making an experimental debut on the Pennsylvania Turnpike. Instead of trucking 25,000 tons of asphalt (for a seven-mile stretch) to a landfill, the road material will be processed at a portable facility. Virgin sand and an asphalt rejuvenator are added to the old paving, and the substance is then microwaved to produce the final product. The process not only keeps old asphalt out of landfills, it is also less harmful to the environment than conventional asphalt-making because production emissions are cleaned.

Nebraska's mandatory bowhunter education program takes effect this year. The new regulation requires anyone born after Jan. 1, 1977, to take a six-hour course. The program is a combination of classroom and outdoor work, and it includes instruction in ethics, behavior, responsibility, and the care and use of archery equipment.

Missouri conservation officials are advising residents not to add glycerine to birdbaths to keep them from freezing. They caution that the chemical is toxic to birds and wouldn't be effective below 19 degrees anyway. Their suggestion: use a commercial heater or daily change the bath with hot water.

An Arkansas study showed most of its tree stand accidents: are with homemade stands (75 percent); happen when the hunter is climbing up or down (60 percent); involved those who hadn't taken a hunter-ed class (84 percent); and result in moderate to severe injuries (75 percent).

Answers: 1 — screech owl; 2 — hooded merganser; 3 — American kestrel; 4 — ovenbird; 5 — chimney swift; 6 — northern flicker; 7 — tree swallow; 8 — tufted titmouse. Misfit: Ovenbird, whose nest is built on the ground. Nesting boxes take the place of *natural tree cavities*.

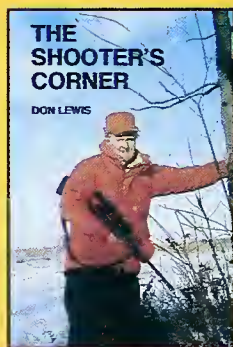
On the Trail of Pennsylvania's Black Bear

Two years in the making, based on the most exhaustive and comprehensive black bear research conducted in North America, *On the Trail of Pennsylvania's Black Bears* is a most entertaining and informative video production on Pennsylvania's premier big game animal. Hosted by Gary Alt and photographed by Game Commission videographer Hal Korber, this 100-minute video will appeal to all wildlife enthusiasts. It costs \$29.95, delivered. Order from the Game Commission, Department MS, 2001 Elmerton Ave., Harrisburg, PA 17110-9797.



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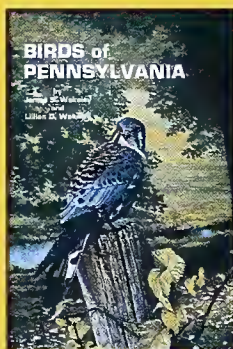


The Shooter's Corner by Don Lewis is a 449-page hardcover detailing nearly every facet of the shooting sports.
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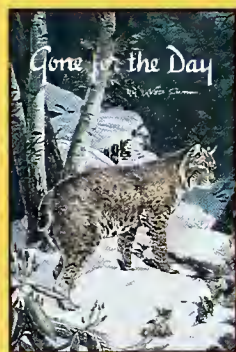
Pennsylvania Big Game Records, 1965-1986, lists the state's official trophy deer and bear records, along with many stories of exciting hunts.
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Birds of Pennsylvania, a 214-page hardcover by James and Lillian Wakeley, highlights birds most commonly found here, plus information on their biology and behavior.
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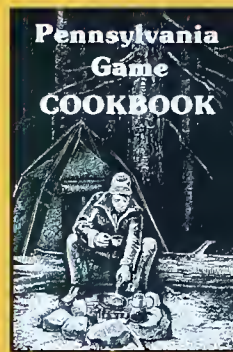


Mammals of Pennsylvania by J. Kenneth I et al profiles the state's mammals — from shrews and shrews to bears and deer — along with their roles in state history.
Price: \$4



Gone for the Day is a compilation of Game News columns written and illustrated by famed wildlife artist and naturalist, the late Ned Smith.
Price: \$4

Pennsylvania Game Cookbook is a collection of nearly 200 recipes for cooking popular, and not so popular, game animals.
Price: \$4



All prices include tax, handling and postage. Make check or money order (no cash, please) payable to Pennsylvania Game Commission, Dept. MS, 2001 Elmerton Ave., Harrisburg, PA 17110-9797. Be sure to ask for a complete list of the agency's paid and free publications.

PENNSYLVANIA GAME NEWS

MARCH 1993

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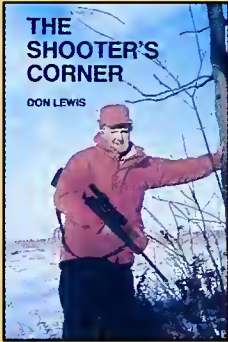
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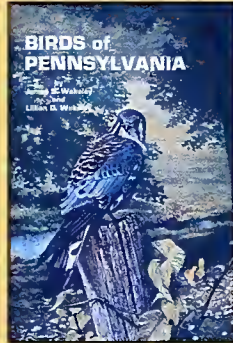


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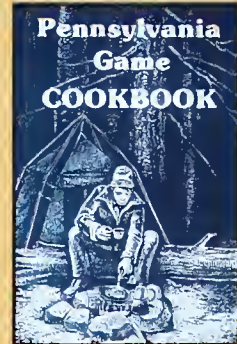


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PENNSYLVANIA GAME NEWS (ISSN 0031-451X) is published monthly for \$9 per year, \$25.50 for three years, or membership in Pennsylvania's Cooperative Farm-Game Project or Safety Zone Project; to Canada and all other foreign countries, \$10 U.S. currency, per year. Published by the Pennsylvania Game Commission, Harrisburg, PA. Phone (717) 787-4250. Second-class postage paid at Harrisburg, Pa. CHANGE OF ADDRESS: POSTMASTER: Send both old and new addresses to Pennsylvania Game News, 2001 Elmerton Ave., Harrisburg, PA 17110-9797. Allow six weeks for processing. Material accepted is subject to our requirements for editing and revising. Author payment covers all rights and title to accepted material, including manuscripts, photographs, drawings and illustrations. No information contained in this magazine may be used for advertising or commercial purposes. Opinions expressed here do not necessarily reflect those of the Pennsylvania Game Commission. Copyright © 1993 by the Pennsylvania Game Commission, an Equal Opportunity Employer, the programs of which are all administered consistent with the goals and objectives of Affirmative Action. All rights reserved.

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Share Your Thoughts

I HAVE BEEN READING *Game News* for a long time and note that nothing is ever printed in the way of ideas or opinions from readers. I'm sure many subscribers would like to exchange information through *Game News*. — M. Gelenser, Gettysburg.

We at *Game News*, too, have long considered a "Letters" type column where readers could express their ideas and concerns. After discussing and debating the pros and cons of the idea for several years, we finally decided to give it a try. The letter that actually got this idea off the ground follows:

A good friend of mine who just passed away was an avid Game News reader who always passed on his magazines to my husband and me. I've always loved fishing, but was very against hunting. I just didn't understand the concept nor did I want to. After reading Game News, however, and going into the woods and learning more about nature, I came to a new understanding. After the feature you did a few years ago, showing several pages of photographs of women hunters with their deer, I decided to give the sport a try. It took me three years, but I finally got my first deer — a 125-pound doe — with a Marlin .30-30. I want to thank the writers of Game News and the women of Pennsylvania for their inspiration. It's you who opened up a whole new door in my life. Once again. Thanks. I'm going back out first thing tomorrow afternoon and try for another. — C. LaFleur, Canton Center, CT.

In addition to serving as a forum through which *Game News* readers could voice their thoughts, another benefit of a "Letters" column is that it would serve as a way of answering questions many other readers have. For example:

In the 1992 hunting season I bagged a fall turkey, black bear, buck and doe. All the animals were legally taken in Pennsylvania, and all report cards were mailed to the Game Commission. My question is, does the Game Commission have a grand slam award, and if we don't, could you direct me to an agency that does? — F. Holt, Maymart.

Dear Mr. Holt,

The Pennsylvania Game Commission does not have anything like a "Grand Slam" award. Years ago, the agency offered a Triple Trophy Award, to those who shot a deer, bear and turkey in the same license year. When it seemed that the award was tempting some individuals to take animals illegally, the Triple Trophy Award was abolished.

Unlike many "Letters to the Editor" columns, we have no intention of publishing anything unethical, misleading or blatantly designed to create confusion. That's not to say controversial issues will be ignored. On the contrary, this may be a good way to present various viewpoints. Letters will be edited for conciseness and clarity. So if you have a question, an opinion or some constructive criticism, drop us a line, addressed to *Game News*, 2001 Elmerton Ave., Harrisburg, PA 17110-9797, and be sure to include your name and address. — Bob Mitchell.

One for Two

By Carol L. Sipos

WE ALL REMEMBER our special moments in the outdoors; even events that weren't so glorious are important when we place them in their proper perspective. Take, for example, the time and effort that we all have put in before bagging our first spring gobbler.

I'd like to share some of those sweet moments of early spring. To me, they're special because I shared many hours in my quest for the Copper Monarch of Penn's Woods with my oldest daughter, Jamie.

We prepared for the seasons by practicing our calling techniques, assembling equipment and scouting territories. We were ready to put our skills to the test, and we headed for our selected area early on the first day of a new season.

Even in those early years we always wore blaze orange caps into the woods, and once we were in position, I would secure them near our set-up. I also placed fluorescent orange bands around our trees. Once in position and all set up, I began to call. Using a slate call, I gave forth with a gentle tree call and then listened closely. No response.

Waiting a few minutes, I began to coax a response with



a few slow and easy yelps. Still no response. I looked at Jamie and said, "We know there's a gobbler here — let's wake him up." We both took turns at calling, gradually increasing the volume of the calls.

"Geecoooble" echoed back. Then, just as quickly, the huge bird came flying through the treetops and landed in the huge oak we were sitting against. Rank beginners, we weren't sure what to do. We froze, but my mind was whirling.

Not wanting to move and spook the gobbler, we just had to wait him out. The sun had come up so brightly that as we were sitting there, we could see the shadow of the bird on the forest floor in front of us.

To jangle our nerves even more, the gobbler was gobbling his head off, anxious to hear from the hen that had invited him for company.

For half an hour we sat and watched the gobbler's shadow, until he finally flew down through the tree tops and landed about 80 yards out. "Okay," I whispered to Jamie, "let's bring him back."

We worked our practiced pattern of shared calling and the gobbler was falling for it.

Following each of our "Yelp, yelp, yelp, purrrrr" calls, the gobbler would

shatter the morning with a resounding gobble. He was steadily closing the distance, and I glimpsed him a few times as he approached. When he was about 40 yards away, a group of deer came barreling between us and the gobbler. The gobbler clamped shut. After the commotion from the deer faded away, the woods were silent.

Staying in position, the experience of our earlier waiting game had taught us a good lesson. Jamie and I were still and quiet, letting the area settle down.

After a short time, I gave a tentative yelp. The old bird was just as shook, and we heard a gentle gobble. We were back into the arena and the challenge was on.

We talked turkey with the gobbler for another 10 minutes, and he was steadily heading our way. But then we heard the crashing and snapping of a herd of deer, which came running right back between us. Our patience didn't help the second time; it was over.

Another morning, another hunt. We decided to set up about 30 yards apart and to take turns calling. Once in position, we began to call. No response. We stayed in position and called for about an hour. Still no response.

Out of patience and apparently out of luck, I

gave a short whistle to Jamie and then stood up and went to see her. Shaking her head, she said: "Mom, a gobbler just snuck right in without making a noise, looked me over, and kept turning his head when you called. Just when he was getting into range for me, you whistled. The gobbler stretched his head out, took a good look and disappeared."

Well, we were doing some things right, I thought. At least we were getting the birds to come in. And we were putting the information together. We were learning and hunting as a team.

We spent several seasons learning just what tricks a gobbler would pull and figuring out how to give ourselves the opportunity to use a few tricks of our own that would eventually help us bag a gobbler.

A few years back, we finally put everything together. Perfect location, perfect calling, and a perfect memory for both of us.

We had decided to head for a stand of oaks above a gas well. We knew gobblers were roosting along the ridge of the hillside, and that most mornings they flew in the direction of a small spring seep and fed toward a little pond in the bottom.

We got into position well before the morning birds started chirping and were waiting as the sun

slid up behind our backs. I started with a few gentle tree calls and immediately got a response. Judging the distance and direction, I figured the bird was about 150 yards away.

I quickly surveyed our location and whispered to Jamie, "We need to move up just a bit so we'll have a spot that's a bit more clear." We quickly moved about 30 yards to an area covered with budding mayapples. There was an occasional patch of brush, too, but the area was relatively open.

As soon as I started calling, the gobbler quickly began to close the distance. At 70 yards, Jamie and I could both occasionally see the gobbler as he picked his path toward us. Strutting in the sun, gobbling in response to each series of yelps, he was a magnificent sight.

As he got closer, I whispered to Jamie, "When the gobbler gets to that little log across the trail, we're both going to take him." Meanwhile, the gobbler was still coming in, and I knew he would come right to us. When he was 40 yards out I let the slate call drop between my feet and told Jamie to bring up her gun.

The gobbler was behind a patch of brush, almost to the log marking

I started with a few gentle tree calls and immediately got a response. I figured the bird was about 150 yards away.

the spot where we would take him. I whispered to Jamie again, "When he reaches the log, wait till he's out of a strut, and I'll count to three. Then we'll both fire."

Strutting into the opening, the gobbler was ready to cover the final distance to us. He announced himself with one final gobble, and I began my count, "One, two, boom." Jamie's shot echoed only a heartbeat behind mine, and our first spring gobbler was down.

We quickly claimed our trophy and admired its 6-inch beard. A beautiful jake, and he was ours. We congratulated each other on this joint effort and success.

Jamie suggested that I place my tag on the gobbler, "After all, Mom, you're the one who called him in."

She then stepped off the distance from the bird to our position against the oak tree — 20 steps exactly. We had met the challenge together.

Jamie and I headed home, and shared our

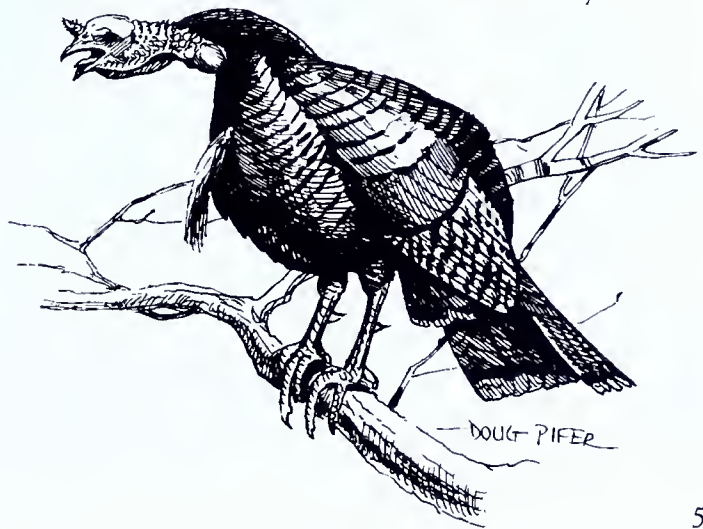
experience with friends and relatives. I also discovered that in all the excitement, I had left the slate call where I had dropped it during the gobbler's approach. We decided to go get the call.

Since it was still early, and I had placed my tag on the gobbler, I asked Jamie, "Do you want to take your shotgun along, and try for a gobbler for your tag?"

She replied, "I've already taken my first gobbler, so I'll leave my gun at home."

On our way into the woods, we skirted the woodline bordering a cornfield, and right at the edge we saw four feeding gobblers. As we approached, they quietly slipped into the cover of the woods. Jamie and I looked at each other and said at the same time, "We got *our* gobbler."

Special moments afield are certainly sweet to remember. All the more so because I know that as the years have passed and we look back on our first gobbler, we share the identical memory.



The Man From Beaner Hollow

By Kevin Robinson

NOT FAR from the spot where the Beaver River joins the Ohio there is a secluded cleft in the rolling Pennsylvania landscape. All around it, urban life threatens to intrude.

Across the great bend in the Ohio, Rochester sits like a guard tower at the meeting of many ways. Behind and to the west, the city of Beaver stares back across the flowing water as it goes busily about business of its own. In the midst of all this, Beaner Hollow remains a miniature wilderness where a good dog can bring 'round a rabbit or scare up a grouse.

In that hollow, a hundred yards or so from the nearest road and hidden from even the most observant passerby, a special man built a house and raised his family. I met him while I was attending Geneva College, and his influence on my life will last long after I have forgotten the names and faces of the professors whose lectures I paid so dearly to attend.

I left Wallkill, NY, in 1969 to attend the small western Pennsylvania liberal arts school. In high school I had worked for a large chain department store, Saturdays and summers for two years. I was a good salesman and knew the company well, so getting a job with them in Beaver Falls wasn't hard. The trouble, however, started right away.

First, they paid me less than I'd started at two years before. And then, though they put me on the sales floor, assigned to a department in which I'd worked before, I seldom did any selling. Somehow I became everybody's unofficial stock boy. I couldn't dress like the store's lone warehouse guy, but I still got all the dirty work.

After ruining every white shirt I owned, I went to see the college job placement service, looking for something — anything — else.

"Can you pump gas?" they asked me.

"Sure," I said, grabbing the index card being offered.

The job was just down at the bottom of the hill, so I wouldn't even need to drive. When I found the old service station, it looked oddly out of place. The office was an add-on to a garage, which was an add-on to the big brown house on the corner. The hand-painted red letters above the door said "Paul's Service."

Across the street, a shiny new Boron station boasted shiny new pumps with shiny new attendants in shiny new uniforms.



Paul's pumps bordered on antique. Instead of smooth black pavement, the dust-covered gas island was surrounded by dirt and gravel — mostly dirt.

I was thinking that Norman Rockwell would have loved the place, especially when I noticed that the old green Mercury parked out front had a canoe strapped on its roof.

This Paul guy, I thought, might be all right. The foot-high stack of hunting and fishing magazines on his battered desk and the patched-up hip boots hanging in the corner left no doubt: The man standing up to greet me was a sportsman.

I've never worked for anyone else like Paul and probably never will. In the years that followed, I learned more from him than from any of the classes I took up on "the hill." I still fold my money in half, with the fives in the crease, followed by the tens and twenties, with the ones on the outside. And I still believe that every gas purchase warrants a clean windshield. (A fill-up deserves nothing less than "windows all around.")

But the lessons I cherish most are the ones I learned in the front seat of that canoe, or following Paul's beagles through the woodlands.

Did you know that near one end of Lake Arthur in Moraine State Park you can catch bluegills longer than your hand? Paul not only told me that, he took me there and proved it. What he failed to tell me was that if I borrowed his canoe and took one of my friends there to show off my new spot, I would catch only baby sunnies. I found that out on my own.

I grew up hunting. I took NRA rifle training when I was 10, and by the time I became of age the local dairy farmers were paying me 50 cents for each groundhog I shot in their pastures. I knew where to spook a rabbit and at which points along the Wallkill River I'd be most likely to

jump some mallards resting on their way south.

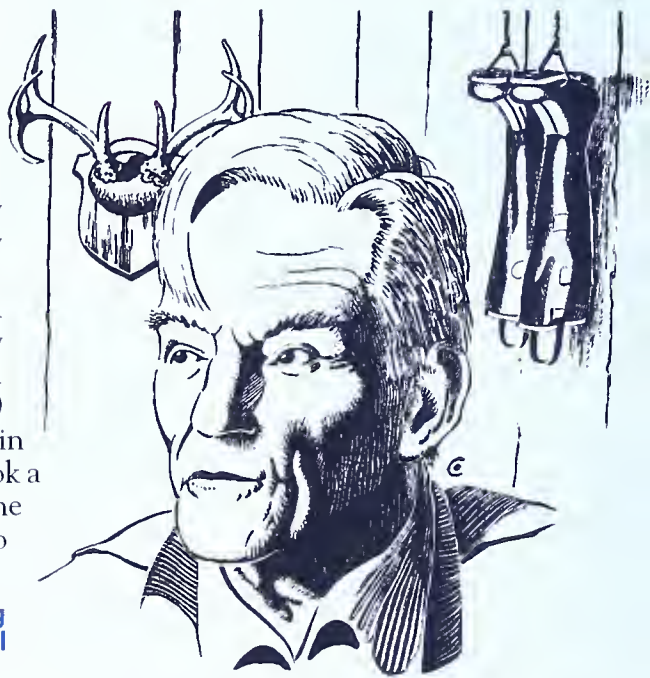
What I didn't know was the joy of a good hunting dog. Looking back, I hate to think how many pheasants I must have "taken for a walk" without ever knowing it.

The first time Paul took me rabbit hunting was an experience I still look back on with disbelief. Sure, I'd read a lot of stories about men and their wonder dogs, but I took it all in with much the same conviction I would muster for a television magic act.

Soon after we had started off through the woods, the old beagle and her pup were yapping up a storm. First they were nearby, then way off in the distance. It was hard not to say something smart like, "I hope they're having fun scaring off everything between here and Ohio," but I liked my job, and Paul appeared to be contemplating the distant racket rather seriously.

"Stand over by that tree," he said, moving off to the right. "She'll bring it right to you."

It wasn't April 1 and Paul didn't seem like a practical joker, so why did I feel like someone was pulling my chain? I concluded that this was some western Pennsylvania ritual — an indication of rank



THE PATCHED-UP hip boots hanging in the corner left no doubt that Paul was a sportsman.

I SET OUT MY DECOYS and all morning I blew my duck call and took pictures as wave after wave of mallards and black ducks settled in.

among hunters. I was expected to pull guard duty while the man who owned the dogs went off to shoot the rabbit.

I remembered with dismay the time I'd been invited along on a coon hunt (my first and last). I carried my 20-gauge Parker around all night, only to learn that the man whose dog trees the coon gets to shoot it, and then only with a .22 rimfire.

While I resigned myself to the inequity of it all, the barking got closer. I quit my moping just long enough to look up and see the rabbit staring at me only 10 feet away. I'd read plenty about buck fever, but the shame of bunny fever won't soon be forgotten.

When the old hound broke into the clearing, the rabbit took off past me like I didn't exist. The hurt in the beagle's eyes said it all: "What do you want me to do, kid, kill it and put it in your game pocket too?"

Off she went with the pup on her heels, and Paul, who was backing me up some yards away, neatly bagged the first rabbit of the day. I told myself I was being courteous, and I told Paul that the rabbit had been "too close." I'm sure he never swallowed that sorry excuse, but it was the best I could do on short notice.

The lessons never seemed to stop. Paul taught me how to make duck decoy anchors out of old wheel weights and coat hangers; how to tie a knot in monofilament line that never slipped; where to look for ruffed grouse; how to spot fresh deer sign; and, of course, how to fix a tubeless tire right the first time.

It was Paul who took me out the day I bagged my first buck. I'll never forget the morning he winged a 12-point and tracked and jumped it all day long, wearing it down by pure persistence and strength of will. And when it came time for us to head for the station and take over for his other employee, Paul stopped a young boy with a single-shot, 20-gauge and sent him over the nearby hilltop and into the pasture beyond. He gave the lad specific instruc-



tions about what the trophy was likely to be doing there.

We hadn't gone a half-mile when a single report broke the late afternoon stillness. When the next day's paper heralded the boy's achievement, Paul taught me another lesson about sportsmanship — he was actually delighted for the lucky little squirt.

One of the most valuable lessons Paul taught me was that of previewing a hunting area *before* the season was underway. This practice had, through the years, given him an edge in knowing where the best spots would be on opening day.

One year I decided I would scout out the perfect place to spend the opening day of duck season. Pymatuning was one of northwestern Pennsylvania's most popular hunting areas, but while there were always plenty of ducks and geese, there were usually too many hunters as well. It occurred to me that if I could find a spot where the other hunters didn't go, and could get there first (and unfollowed), I'd have a real opportunity to impress my boss.

After a couple of trips up there with Paul's canoe I had found the perfect spot. I even took my decoys and my camera a week before the season and conducted a dry run. My discovery was a small island, far from anything and everything. The nearest cover was on the shore, a mile away.

I set out my decoys well before dawn and hid the boat in the island's bushes. All that morning I blew my duck call and took pictures as wave after wave of mallards and black ducks settled in for a visit. Even the makeshift blind I had invented (made by tie-dyeing a big piece of nylon netting green and brown) worked flawlessly.

I'm not sure what Paul was really planning that year, but he listened politely while I showed him my pictures and gave him my pitch. It was foolproof. We'd drive up the night before, paddle out to the island, set up a tent, cook supper over a campfire, build our blind, and set out the decoys before we went to bed.

To this day, I don't know how he kept a straight face. He just cocked his eyebrow slightly, thought it over for a bit, and then agreed to go with me.

Everything went like clockwork, and I can't remember a Christmas Eve in all my life that held more promise than that autumn night. The decoys looked so real in the moonlight that I half expected them to start quacking. In the distance, real ducks and geese chatted amongst themselves as they settled in for the night.

I didn't sleep a wink. We were sitting under the netting well before the sun was even thinking of coming up, and the sounds of more waterfowl than I'd ever heard in one place carried across the dark, fog-shrouded water. Soon they would all be flocking in on our dinner tables — and all because of my shrewd planning. I was teaching the master . . . and loving it.

With 15 minutes to go, ducks could be seen faintly, flying through the mist, sometimes right over our heads. Ten minutes till, they were buzzing the decoys; several landed just out of sight beyond the set. With less than five minutes left my adrenaline pumped so hard I didn't hear the boat motors.

"What's that?" Paul asked.

"Ducks. Lots of ducks."

"No, not that," he said. "It sounds like we're going to have some company."

"You must be mistaken," I assured him. "Nobody comes out here."

Suddenly we were sitting in the middle of a war zone. Shots rang out from all directions. Whatever ducks had been planning to join us were long gone, but the firefight went on for some time.

As the fog lifted and the light grew stronger, I saw that my island paradise was encircled with bright and shiny speed boats.

The one sitting just 40 yards beyond our decoys was fire truck red. We never did see what they were standing up and shooting at, but shot fell on us like a heavy rain.

We would have left right away, but there was the matter of our personal safety to consider. I attempted a joke by suggesting a white flag, but Paul wasn't laughing.

By the time we did get up the courage to break

camp and paddle out of there, several of our decoys had been wounded and listed toward open water. One of the plastic mallard drakes had already taken on so much water that it rode the light chop like a loon, only its head and tail above the surface. Neither of us fired a shot that day, and the ride home was very long and quiet.

I've always believed that Paul forgave me for that episode. I still stop at his gas station whenever I get back to the Beaver Valley, and seeing Paul always brings back memories of life's greatest joys.

The last time was a little tougher for both of us. He shared some of his latest hunting and fishing stories, just like old times. Then I told him about my stint as a forest ranger in Florida, and how I broke my neck and ended up in this wheelchair.

We'll probably never get to hunt together again, but no one can ever take away those times and those lessons. If I could have one wish, I'd wish that every young boy in the world could have a friend like the man from Beaver Hollow.

Suddenly we were sitting in the middle of a war zone. Shots rang out from all directions.

Whatever ducks had been planning to join us were long gone.



First Kill

By William Johnson

Screaming and flashing through the opening, the black forms had my heart racing and my palms sweating.

I LEANED BACK against the maple, peered up through an opening in the light green foliage overhead, and gave the 16-gauge pump I was holding a hard squeeze. I had waited a lifetime for this moment and I wanted to be sure it was really happening. Admittedly, at 12 years of age, my life had just begun. But I'd wanted to hunt so badly for so long, the wait had seemed like an eternity.

My dad and my great uncle, Al Miller, were with me. A series of sharp blasts from Uncle Al's crow call shattered the stillness of the spring woods. Within seconds several crows answered, and before long a dozen were circling overhead, coming lower and lower, trying to find out what had caused the first alarm call to be sounded.

Screaming and flashing through the opening, the black forms had my heart racing and my palms sweating. It was happening all too fast. The crows were just black blurs as they crossed the opening. I pointed the pump skyward at the center of the opening and waited. One, two, three crows flashed by. As a fourth crow approached I gritted my teeth and pulled the trigger. The shotgun barrel never moved — it remained frozen in the center of the opening.

Crows apparently do not enjoy being shot at, even by someone who was a threat only to those he wasn't aiming at. After the shot, they circled a few times, out of gun range, and then disappeared. Meanwhile, I had the worst case of the shakes I had ever experienced. I was shaking so badly that I had a hard

time chambering another round. In all honesty, I was relieved the crows had gone because I was in no shape to shoot another round.

I had regained my composure by the time Uncle Al joined us. I figured I had shot too soon, but nobody made any comments.

"I didn't lead him enough," I said nonchalantly, hoping to head off any questions about my shooting. Fortunately they were kind and nothing else was said. We tried calling from a few other spots, but we couldn't get the crows to come back.

I was quiet that night on the ride home. Dad probably figured I was just tired, but I was deep in thought.

I had waited a lifetime to go hunting and I had failed miserably. I blamed myself for scaring the crows off with that horrendous shot. Worse yet, remembering my reaction after the shot, I wasn't even sure I could shoot at more than one animal a day.

A great thing about being young is being able to bounce back quickly. When my next opportunity came, in July of that year, I was as eager as ever.

We were visiting Uncle Gene. Dad and another brother Glenn were helping Gene remodel an old farm house he had bought south of Dillsburg.

I had been pestering Dad all day to go hunting. During a well-deserved break on that hot afternoon, while Gene and Glenn kicked back under a big shade tree, Dad took me groundhog hunting.

Dad had his old .22 and I had my shotgun. We crossed a pasture behind the house and entered the woods. A year earlier the big oaks had been logged, and the

tops of the trunks and the crowns had been left behind.

"There's one," Dad exclaimed, pointing to a groundhog running along one of the downed oak trunks. My first load of 4s caught him broadside and my second load anchored him for good.

In the silence that followed, the significance of what had happened began to sink in: I had made my first kill. There had been no hesitation or confusion, I had acted solely on instinct. I didn't even remember working the action and aiming again after the first shot.

Best of all, I didn't start shaking — I just felt a tremendous sense of pride and accomplishment. I had waited for this moment for as long as I could remember and now it was here.

As I got older I soon learned that for many things in life the anticipation is often greater than the realization. This was not the case here, however — the feeling was better than I could have ever imagined.

With the hunt over, I couldn't wait to get back to the house and show off my trophy. I proudly displayed the groundhog and went over all the details. Glenn and Gene thoroughly examined the old, scarred chuck and congratulated me.

As the celebration subsided, Gene told me to throw the chuck in the woods. But Dad immediately stepped in and said, "No, we're going to eat him." Dad and I had already discussed it. This was my first kill, and I thought it was only fitting that we eat him.

Given the groundhog's advanced age, I think Dad knew we were making a mistake. But he also knew how much it meant to me, so he didn't try to talk me out of it.



DAD SPOTTED a groundhog running along a downed oak trunk. My first load of No. 4s caught him broadside and my second anchored him for good.

Even when we couldn't skin the groundhog ourselves and needed help from Glenn to get the job done, Dad never tried to dissuade me.

When we returned home I insisted that we have the groundhog for Sunday dinner instead of the usual beef roast. My mother and my two sisters never really warmed to the idea, and by the time Sunday rolled around and the groundhog was in the oven, there was open rebellion.

My sisters said it looked like a dog and they weren't going to eat it. My mother agreed and began making hamburgers for the three of them. She also wanted to throw the groundhog out right then, but Dad stuck up for me and said we would eat it.

With tremendous anticipation, I took the first bite. Four minutes later, when I was still chewing that first bite, I knew I

had made a mistake. I played around with my vegetables for a while, trying to decide how to gracefully get out of my predicament.

When I looked at Dad, who was still chewing on his first bite, I said, "Maybe we should throw this thing out." With obvious relief he pushed aside the rest of the groundhog and said, "Betty, how about putting on a couple more hamburgers?"

It meant a lot to me that Dad had stuck by me and I plan to do no less for my son. Danny is as anxious as I was to turn 12 and go hunting. And since his birthday is in the spring, I have already resigned myself to another meal of varmint. In fact, I've started collecting groundhog recipes.

I hope, however, that he won't be any better of a wing shot than I was at 12 years of age. I'm really not looking forward to eating crow.

Fun Games

Wetlands & Wildlife

By Connie Mertz

How much do you know about Pennsylvania's wetlands. Find the three false statements.

1. T F Wetlands include salt and tidal marshes, bogs and swamps.
2. T F Wetlands are breeding and nesting grounds for millions of ducks.
3. T F Wetlands are really wastelands for wildlife.
4. T F Waterfowl hunting isn't allowed in any wetland areas.
5. T F Pennsylvania is estimated to have 500,000 acres of wetlands remaining, half of our original amount.
6. T F Many of Pennsylvania's endangered species depend on wetlands to survive.
7. T F Wetlands can never be restored once filled.
8. T F Wetlands are a source of flood and erosion control, and act as filters to keep unwanted materials from entering streams.
9. T F Some duck populations are decreasing largely because of wetland destruction.
10. T F It is illegal to fill wetlands in Pennsylvania without proper permits.

answers on p. 64

Henry W. Shoemaker chronicled much of Pennsylvania's early history; his works have preserved a view of the state's pioneer days.

Storyteller

By Mike Sajna

TALES OF OUTLAWS, witches, ghosts, lumbermen, Indians and wild beasts were the catalysts. They fired his imagination through the 1880s and 1890s during boyhood summers spent at a family home on the edge of the mountains. Later, as a college student, they would lead him to begin roaming northern Pennsylvania on his own, talking to old pioneers, hunters and the few Indians who remained in the region.

He would continue exploring the mountains on foot, by horseback and carriage through the turn of the century, until he left college and business. Then a period as a diplomat in Europe brought a halt to his wanderings, keeping him away from the land he loved for half a decade.

When he finally returned to northern Pennsylvania in 1907 he found a land far different than the one he had known only a few years earlier. Hungry for lumber to



WHEN SHOEMAKER returned to the state after several years abroad, he found the land much changed. Loggers had stripped the commonwealth of its virgin timber stands, leaving in their wake a desolate landscape. It was then that he decided to save for posterity Pennsylvania's fast-disappearing history.

build its railroads and factories and mines, the Industrial Revolution had turned the area's virgin forests into a vast desert.

"Miles of slashings, fire-swept wastes, emptiness, desolation, ruin met the eye on every side; the lumberman had done their work. Hoping against hope, the writer rode on, but only dreariness was his portion. Gone were the hemlocks, beeches, maples and pines; gone the sweet singing birds, the balmy breezes, gone even were the lumbermen with their red or blue shirts, the lumber camps, the stemwinder log railways, gone was everything but ruin."

Still, he could not stay away. Over the next three years he would once again undertake regular trips into the mountains, journeys that, along with accentuating his "sense of sadness for the arboreal paradise that was no more," alerted him to the passing of many old stories.

Like the ancient mountain men who first related them to him, the tales were disappearing fast. He decided he had to do something and began recording them.

Thanks to both the fascination and foresight of that single man, Henry W. Shoemaker, hundreds of stories, legends and songs, dating back to the time of the first white settlers in Pennsylvania's mountains, were collected in print and saved from extinction.

One such tale is "The Winter of the Wolves," about John Wallize, a Polish refugee living in Philadelphia around the end of the 18th century. Wallize decided he could make more money hunting wolves for bounty than by operating a notion shop. So he sold his store and started up the Susquehanna River for northern Pennsylvania.

To assure a profit, Wallize estimated he would have to return with 500 prime wolf hides, 100 black bear skins, and 100 fox and other hides.

The Indians he hired along his way up the Susquehanna told him such a catch was possible along Windfall Run and guided him to

that tributary of Cross Fork Creek in what is now Potter County.

Upon arriving on the stream, Wallize and the others quickly built a cabin against the mountain next to a waterfall and then ran their trapline. The area proved such a good location that the first day they snared 25 wolves and four black bears, all within a mile radius of the camp. Within the first week, the hides of 110 wolves and eight black bears were ready for market. Then it began to snow.

The snow fell for a week, almost without letup, until by Christmas Eve it was up to the cabin windows and by Christmas Day was banked halfway to the tops of the



IF IT WEREN'T for Henry Shoemaker, much of the state's history would be lost. He was able to talk to people who remembered what Pennsylvania was like when the state represented the frontier, and his priceless photographs capture the times.



windows. It continued through the night and when morning came had drifted as high as the roof, preventing the trappers from opening the door; it sealed them inside the cabin.

At first Wallize and the others viewed the snow with nonchalance. But after another week passed without the snow letting up and their supply of bear steaks exhausted, the air in the cabin began to sour. Fear began to take over.

Avalanche

They removed the door from its hinges and attacked the white wall with picks and shovels. The relentless snow and wind, however, kept them from making any headway and they had to give up. Then, at midnight, the hemlocks on the slope above let go and the cabin was buried in an avalanche.

Desperate to escape being buried alive, the men turned from the snow-blocked windows and door; they chopped away a wall of the cabin. But that route was cut

off, too. They were as securely trapped as any of their quarry and were about to surrender to their fate when Wallize heard a faint scratching.

The sound, as it grew stronger, had a revitalizing effect on the men and they began to claw their way toward it — until suddenly they were face to face with a pack of wolves.

The ensuing battle ended with all of the wolves being killed, but it also changed the attitude of the men toward the creature. "What a shame it was to kill those wolves, our deliverers," said Wallize.

"It was wrong, especially as we Indians belong to the clan whose patron saint is the wolf," replied the Indian Little Canoe. Wallize finished the season with more than 2,000 pelts, almost 1,000 of which were wolf hides. He sold them for a good profit in Philadelphia, but never again trapped a wolf.

Descendant from a Dutch couple who arrived in the New World in 1685 and settled in Germantown, Henry Wharton Shoemaker was born in New York City on February 24, 1882.

His father, Henry Francis Shoemaker, served as a first lieutenant with the 27th Pennsylvania Volunteers during the Civil War. After the war he went on to head the Cincinnati, Hamilton & Dayton Railway and organize the Hamilton National Bank of New York.

After attending private schools in New York and Columbia University, the young Shoemaker took a job with his father's railway. He worked in company offices in New York and Cincinnati, and construction camps in the Midwest for a few years. He then entered the diplomatic corps in 1904, serving in both Portugal and Germany.

OUR STATE has a longstanding hunting tradition. Following the timber boom, white-tailed deer flourished. In olden days, Pennsylvania was home to a number of species long since gone. The photo at right is titled "Panther Tale"; panthers, elk and wolves used to roam the state.



Returning to the United States in 1905, Shoemaker joined with his brother, William, to found the banking firm of Shoemaker, Bates & Co.

He stayed with the firm until it was dissolved in 1911 and then purchased the *Altoona Tribune*. He would later also acquire Altoona's *Gazette* and *Times*, merging the three into the *Times Tribune* and making himself one of the most prominent newspapermen in Pennsylvania.

The love Shoemaker formed for Pennsylvania during his youth translated into him serving, at various times, as a member of the Pennsylvania Forest Commission, Historical Commission, Geographic Board, the Bushy Run Battlefield Memorial Commission, the Pennsylvania Battlefields Memorial Commission in France, the Huguenot Society of Pennsylvania, the Netherlands Society of Philadelphia and the Pennsylvania Federation of Historical Societies.

Through his newspapers, speeches and associations, Shoemaker also worked to preserve and develop recreational areas in Pennsylvania's forests and helped prepare the curriculum used in state forestry schools.



In 1924 the then state Forestry Department honored him by naming a peak in the White Deer range of Union County, Shoemaker Mountain.

The breadth of interest Shoemaker had in Pennsylvania can be seen in the titles of his many books about the state, among them:

Legends of the Pennsylvania Mountains, a 12-volume set published from 1913 to 1922; *Great Stories of Pennsylvania Hunters* (1913); *Black Forest Souvenirs* (1914); *Pennsylvania Deer and Their Horns* (1915); *Extinct Pennsylvania Animals* (1915 and 1918); *Captain Logan* (1919); *Mountain Minstrels of Pennsylvania* (1919); *Campaign Biography of Gifford Pinchot* (1922); *Gipsy Life and Gipsy Lore in the Pennsylvania Mountains* (1924); *Indian Folk Songs of Pennsylvania* (1928); *Proverbs and Sayings of Pennsylvania Mountain People* (1930); *Old and Obsolete Words of Pennsylvania Mountain People* (1930); *Pennsylvania Firearms* (1930); and *John Brown in Pennsylvania* (1931).

Along with the books he wrote or compiled himself, Shoemaker also co-authored *In Penn's Woods* (1922) with Dr. Joseph S. Illick, the former chief of the Office of Research of the state Forestry Department.

Bulgarian Envoy

Probably because of his strong support for Republican causes, Shoemaker was appointed envoy to Bulgaria by President Herbert Hoover in 1930. He remained at that post for three years, during which time he was honored by both the Bulgarian and Greek governments.

After that posting he returned to the U.S. and Pennsylvania where he continued to be active in historical affairs until his death in 1958.

Despite his prolific output, or maybe because of it, Shoemaker today is not looked upon as a great historian. Even quick readings of some of his books by a person knowledgeable about Pennsylvania and wildlife will show that he often played rather fast and loose with both historic and natural facts.

He himself admits as much more than once, noting that "doubtless some one

could have done this work more thoroughly or better, it deserved more time, but the truth remains that no one else has tried."

Whatever their shortcomings, Shoemaker's works remain as at least glimpses into the past and certainly entertaining adventures. Take "Young Woman's Creek," a legend about how that stream received its name.

It was the year of independence, 1776, when Mary Wolford and her family moved from their home in Union County up the West Branch of the Susquehanna River to Clinton County. At the time, the area was ruled by Chief Bald Eagle who, when he met Mary, fell in love with her. But she was betrothed to James Brady, the son of famed Indian fighter Captain John Brady, and Mary was indifferent to the chief's advances.

Learning of Mary's love for Brady, Bald Eagle became jealous and presumed had the young Brady killed. Then, soon afterwards, Captain David, an Indian who originally lived on the land on which the Wolfords settled, appeared at the family farm with three other braves and demanded payment for the property.

Fateful Argument

His price was 100 pounds, all the livestock the family owned, their guns, ammunition, furniture and clothing. When Mary's father refused, saying the price was too great, an argument erupted in which Mary fired a shot from the cabin and hit one of the Indians.

Captain David and the others responded by killing Mary's father and two brothers. Seeing this, Mary, her mother and sister fled.

The Indians soon found Mrs. Wolford and her youngest daughter and killed them. Mary, however, managed to elude the Indians until evening. But when she returned to the cabin that night to look for her mother and sister, she was captured.

Hoping to escape any other whites who might appear, the Indians marched Mary through the forest all night and the next day, until they reached a hidden campsite. It was while she was being held at the camp

Shoemaker reprints

Three of Henry Shoemaker's books have recently been reprinted and are available for the first time in decades. *Black Forest Souvenirs* contains stories about the Black Forest region of northcentral Pennsylvania; *Pennsylvania Deer and Their Horns* looks at old time deer hunters and their quarry; and *Tales of the Bald Eagle Mountains*, a collection of legends — one from each mountain in the Bald Eagle chain. Details on both books may be obtained by writing: Pine Creek Historian, Swiss Chalet Lane, Waterville, PA 17776-0067.

that one of the Indians began to feel sorry for her and loosely tied her to a tree. When the other Indians weren't looking, she freed herself and, with her arms still tied, fled into the woods.

Seeing what had happened, one of the Indians began to give chase. He trailed Mary to the mouth of a nearby creek where she at first paused, staring at the rain swollen depths before her, and then waded in.

She was about to the middle of the stream when the Indian appeared, picked up a rock and threw it at her. The rock struck her in the back and knocked her off her feet. With her arms tied and a gag in her mouth, she was unable to right herself or breathe and was quickly swept to her death.

The body of Mary Wolford floated out of the creek and down the West Branch, until it washed ashore at the foot of a grassy hill near Sunbury. There a woman who had gone to place flowers on a grave noticed the body.

"My God, it's Mary Wolford's corpse," she said to herself. "Is she gone too? Well, well, she has come in death to be united to the boy she loved."

The woman was Mary Brady and the grave she was tending was that of her son James, Mary's true love. Mary was buried next to James, and from then on the stream in which she drowned has been known as Young Woman's Creek.

Pennsylvania Breeding Bird Atlas

By Daniel Brauning
PGC Biologist

FOR SEVEN CONSECUTIVE summers during the 1980s, up to 2,000 volunteer birdwatchers spent nearly 100,000 hours conducting a systematic survey of breeding birds throughout Pennsylvania. The results of this undertaking have just been published as the *Atlas of Breeding Birds in Pennsylvania*.

This easy to use book represents the most comprehensive and detailed survey of the state's nesting birds ever conducted. The *Atlas* specifically focused on breeding birds, but the goal was not to find a nest for every bird encountered.

Censusers, or atlasers as we were known, worked in 10-square-mile areas called blocks. A set of codes, adopted from other atlasing efforts, were devised to document behavior that would indicate, in various degrees, that the species was nesting in the block.

These codes were grouped into three breeding categories. "Possible" breeding represented a single sighting; "probable" breeding typically involved a pair or territorial bird; and "confirmed" breeding represented instances when atlasers located nests or recently fledged young, or saw food being carried for young. Within these categories, specific codes were used to describe the actual behaviors seen.

Each *Atlas* participant undoubtedly holds fond memories of the blocks they worked. For me, atlasing consumed nearly all my time over six summers. Much of the time I spent working northern tier counties, where there were few birders.

On one of my first excursions I set up camp in an old gravel pit not far off a dirt road near Overton, Bradford County. I was



THE BLACKED-CAPPED CHICKADEE is abundant throughout the state and a common visitor to winter bird feeders. Not surprisingly, this species was found nesting in 84 percent of the blocks surveyed. It was absent only in the state's southeast and southwest corners.

awakened in the middle of the night by a duetting pair of barred owls. Although I'd soon learn this was a common sound in Pennsylvania's mountains, it was an exciting beginning for a fellow from Philadelphia. From that start in 1984, I went on to

cover hundreds of blocks in 18 counties of the state.

In the field, atlasers often heard or got fleeting glimpses of elusive sparrows or warblers that were never again found in the area. That was frustrating in some cases, but when these sightings occurred in correct habitat and during the nesting season, these observations were sufficient to regard the species as a “possible” nester in that block.

Nearly a third of all *Atlas* reports were “possibles.” The calling barred owls I mentioned provided better evidence of nesting, so they were regarded as “probable.” “Confirmed” breeding represented instances when atlasers saw breeding behavior that left no doubts nesting had occurred nearby. Actual nests weren’t often discovered, but those, of course, also represented “confirmed” breeding.

A third of all observations involved confirmed breeding. Turkey and grouse broods were occasionally added to lists when atlasers found them while cruising back-country roads. Broods represented confirmed breeding, while a lone bird was considered a “possible” record — but each indicated evidence of a breeding population in that block.

Confirmed breeding evidence was particularly valuable for uncommon or unexpected species. For such birds, the sighting of a single individual did not reliably indicate nesting had occurred.



An example was the yellow-bellied flycatcher — a small, difficult to identify species that had not been found nesting in the state for many years. I was fortunate enough to come across a singing male in a small wetland in Tiadaghton State Forest of northern Lycoming County. Throughout much of its range it favors dense spruce bogs, but not a spruce tree could be found in this swamp.

By itself, that sighting may have not been significant. Nevertheless, Doug Gross, a friend and local birder, returned to the area later that summer and discovered several young yellow-bellied flycatchers. The confirmation settled any doubts. Doug continued to pursue the elusive yellow-belly and found two nests in 1991, the first known nests of the species in Pennsylvania in more than 40 years.

Not all summer bird sightings are included in the published *Atlas*. Birds flying high overhead, for example, did not necessarily mean they were nesting in the area. One of my most surprising observations proved not to be breeding birds at all.

While scanning White Oak Pond in Wayne County near Forest City, I spotted three dark birds flying over the water, frequently swooping down to the surface. On closer inspection, I found they were black terns, known to nest in Pennsylvania only in Crawford and Erie counties.

They were sighted several days later by local coordinator Joe Strasser. I next visited the spot several weeks later with a canoe and Wyatt Barnes, then a pre-teen birding dynamo. Our goal was to find a black tern nest in the cattails on the far side of the pond, but we were unsuccessful. The birds, we believe, had only visited the pond for a few days.

Our efforts were rewarded, however, when we found some territorial soras and Virginia rails. Although the terns don’t appear on atlas maps in Wayne County

THE BARRED OWL, according to the atlas results, is the state’s third most widely distributed owl — following the great horned and screech owls. Moist forest types that are extensive and mature offer suitable nesting sites for this species.

because the sightings had no relation to nesting, the two rail species are recorded as "probables" in the block that includes White Oak Pond.

In total, more than 2,000 sightings were regarded as nonbreeding observations. They were not mapped, but they remain in the data base — a drop in the bucket compared to the more than 310,000 bird reports comprising the data base.

Atlasing is truly an international effort. Begun in Great Britain in the 1960s, breeding bird atlases have been conducted across Europe, in Africa and Australia. New York and Maryland had projects well underway, and some New England states had completed their atlas projects when Pennsylvania joined this growing movement.

The publication of the first North American Breeding Bird Atlas Workshop and a 1982 article in *American Birds* fueled interest and provided the operational details. The idea to initiate a project in Pennsylvania came independently from three sources: the State College Bird Club, long a leader in state initiatives; Ed Fingerhood of Philadelphia; and Terry Master and Dan Klem in Allentown. Each began to develop plans in 1982.

The newly organized Pennsylvania Audubon Council enthusiastically endorsed the effort and provided seed money that brought together the various groups and got the project off the ground.

A coalition of birding enthusiasts quickly developed, and under the leadership of Dr. Frank Gill and Ed Fingerhood at the Academy of Natural Sciences, the project began. I became involved in 1983 as a recently graduated ornithologist.

Dependable funding became available in 1984 from the Wild Resource Conservation Fund (WRCF). For five years the *Atlas* was a top priority and received a large portion of WRCF moneys.

Those funds, in addition to private

grants from the R.K. Mellon Foundation and several others, made possible the field work and, later, the publication.

A network of regional coordinators was installed to recruit volunteers and organize results for counties or groups of counties. From the outset, regional coordinators recognized the immensity of the task. Coordinators were selected based on their birding expertise and included many of the state's most recognized experts.

The early meetings with coordinators were tumultuous. Many were not convinced the entire state could be surveyed; some wanted to use larger blocks; others saw a lack of skilled birders in their regions.

Despite their misgivings, they accepted the challenge to complete all of the state's blocks. Their concern was well taken: Pennsylvania has 4,928 blocks and at that time had no state ornithological society or statewide ornithological journal to organize the state's birders. Early on, coordinators undoubtedly suspected much of the work would fall on their shoulders.

After the trial season in 1983 and the first statewide effort in 1984, the project grew. Over the next four seasons regional coordinators were found to fill vacant counties, and many new birders joined up.

In 1988, nearly 2,000 birders contributed more than 20,000 hours in the field, censusing nearly two-thirds of the state's blocks. It wasn't until that point that many



THE YELLOW-BILLED CUCKOO has long been a common breeding resident in southern Pennsylvania, and over the past 50 years it has spread into the north, too. The bird seems to prefer brushy areas, overgrown pastures and even suburban developments.

coordinators became convinced the project would be completed.

In Pennsylvania, the objective was to document as many nesting birds within a block as reasonably possible. As atlasers spent more time in their blocks, they uncovered more habitats and hidden corners and, hence, documented more birds.

While the number of species nesting in an area is primarily determined by habitat diversity, an arbitrary goal of 70 species was established for each block. This gave volunteers something to work toward and a reason to move on to another block.

Many skilled birders could identify more than 70 species in a reasonably diverse block in less than 20 hours. A most knowledgeable birder in a very diverse block could produce more than 100 species. In the end, the statewide average was 67 species per block.

In some cases, a set of priority blocks was selected to assure that at least some blocks in each area were surveyed thoroughly and to lighten the load for the remaining blocks. These priority blocks received much greater coverage and averaged slightly more than 70 species each.

Many volunteers, myself included, constantly had to balance the desire to obtain full lists of species in a block with the need to move on to new blocks to complete the job. I frequently worked in large regions in which there were few other birders.

Some of my fondest atlasing memories are from southwestern Bradford County, including parts of SGLs 12 and 36, and

northern Lycoming County, including SGL 75. This expanse of mountain forests and valley farms hosts a wide diversity of wildlife.

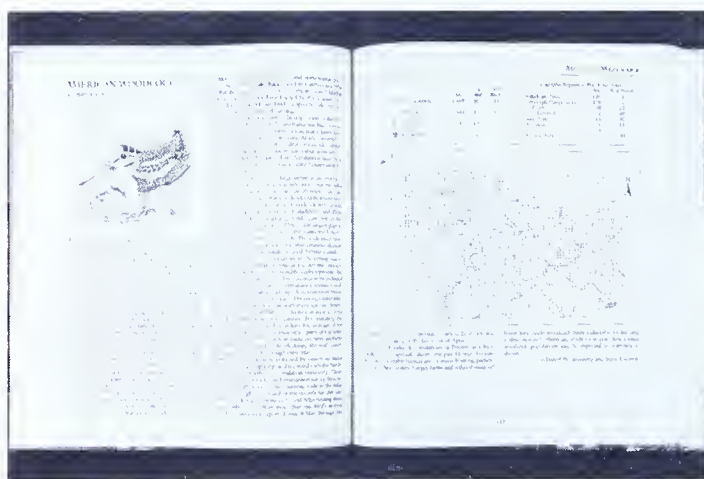
Birds restricted to northern forested wetlands, such as the northern waterthrush, were present in low numbers and required much searching. The elusive Henslow's sparrow could be found in scattered old fields in the valleys of Bradford County. I approached this area by starting early and moving almost constantly — always looking for distinctive habitats that might have supported unique species.

In some cases I completed more than one block in a day. Occasional close encounters with black bears and rattlesnakes kept me alert. Volunteers across the state were faced with similar demands.

The greatest value of this work was the documentation of common and widespread, but poorly known, species at so many locations. Documenting that the American robin occurred in more blocks than any other species, more than 99 percent of the total, may not be earth-shattering. But the widespread distribution of ravens, several birds of prey, and a variety of songbirds has great value.

At a time when there is real concern about the status of many small birds, particularly those that winter in the tropics, the *Atlas* provides a solid measure of their distribution that will be compared to other surveys for years to come.

Although it doesn't replace specific game bird surveys, the *Atlas* does provide



***The Atlas of Breeding Birds in Pennsylvania* is a compilation of information on 188 of the state's breeding birds. Each species account includes an illustration, discussion of habitats, natural history, interpretation of why a species occurs where it does, and a breeding range map. A must for any outdoorsman curious about what birds nest where in the state, this book is available at major bookstores, and from the University of Pittsburgh Press, Pittsburgh, PA. Price is \$34.95.**

a snapshot of the distribution of all birds nesting in the state, including game species. It independently verifies the Commission's evaluation of wild turkeys and shows areas of expansion into the southeastern counties.

Despite the dramatic decline in ring-necked pheasant numbers, the bird's widespread distribution is clearly shown. This map largely reflects crowing males in June, but also includes many sightings of broods (the confirmed blocks).

The *Atlas* results were the most important piece of information in revising the list of Species of Special Concern. Henslow's sparrow was taken off the state threatened list because the number of blocks — 363 — in which it was found during the atlas was far greater than most special concern species.

Some birds previously listed as "status undetermined," such as the bobolink, are not now regarded as special concern. With continuing pressures on habitats and bird populations, this atlas will be valuable for comparing populations in the future.

Although documenting widespread species was tremendously important, the discovery of a rare bird, or a species far from its previously known range, was always a high point and source of motivation for atlas volunteers. Some of the discoveries were undoubtedly remarkable.

Black-necked stilt (a coastal shorebird) and common jackdaw (a European crow) were confirmed breeding for the first time in Pennsylvania. The jackdaw nests nowhere else in North America, and it continues to occur at the Federal Penitentiary at Lewisburg.

Four of the nine species that had disappeared from Pennsylvania as nesting birds (called extirpated species) — osprey, peregrine falcon, loggerhead shrike and dickcissel — were recorded during the atlas.

Many birds were found much more widely than previously shown in published reports. Common mergansers, northern saw-whet owls, Henslow's sparrows and yellow-rumped warblers were found across more of Pennsylvania than previously suspected.

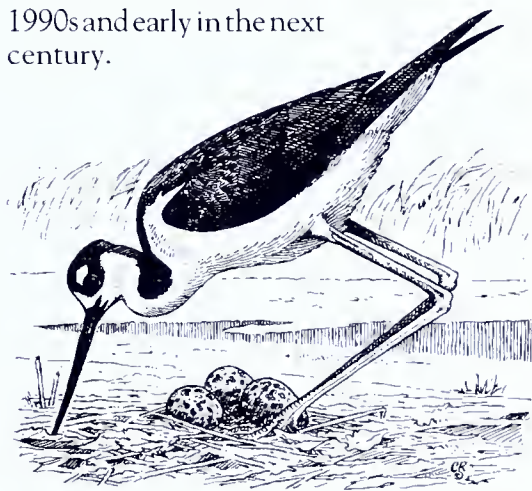
Significant expansions of species known to be increasing were well-documented, including black vulture, red-bellied woodpecker, common raven, golden-crowned kinglet, hermit thrush, yellow-throated warbler, blue-winged warbler, blue grosbeak and house finch.

From not nesting anywhere in Pennsylvania just 55 years ago, the wide distribution of the Canada goose is clearly demonstrated.

The personal commitment and sacrifices of the coordinators and volunteers made the project possible. It's safe to say that an atlas volunteer was within a mile and a half of any point in every Pennsylvania county during the seven years it took to survey the state's blocks.

Many atlasers contributed countless hours to the work, and the resulting *Atlas of Breeding Birds in Pennsylvania* stands as a monument to their efforts.

Great Britain has started its second atlas effort, which begins the next generation of the program. The second time around will be of great interest in every nation and state because changes in the ranges of birds can then be more accurately compared. Plans are already being made to repeat bird atlases in the Northeastern states at the end of the 1990s and early in the next century.



THE BLACKED-NECKED STILT is among the rarest and newest additions to the state's list of breeding birds. Primarily a bird of coastal marshes in the southeast and western United States, in Pennsylvania, the bird was found nesting at only one location, outside Philadelphia.



The magic of spring doesn't belong solely to gobbler hunters, although sportsmen who take the time to look around often discover some . . .

Things They Can't Teach You

By David P. Krupa

AT AGE 30, I decided to start hunting spring gobblers. It was a decision that, for the most part, had been nurtured along by the many turkey hunters who spent the off-season hanging out in my taxidermy studio.

I enjoy being a taxidermist. I get to see the finest specimens each species of wildlife has to offer, and I'm always ensured of a good story to go along with each customer's visit.

It was many of these stories that first stirred my curiosity about spring turkey hunting. The "edge-of-the-seat" excitement I later found out was as much a part

of spring gobbler hunting as the box calls, raspy old hens and the wondrous big toms.

Being a taxidermist also brought me closer to the wild turkey than I'd ever been able to get in the wild. In my studio I was close enough to appreciate their true beauty — the iridescent play of colors blended masterfully by nature's hand is something I failed in my early days to associate with the wild turkey. Back then, to me, a turkey was just a big black ugly bird.

Turkey hunters are much like artists. They see in their subjects a beauty that passes by the average person's eye. When

A SUDDEN MOVEMENT caught my eye just ahead. I stopped and watched for a moment and was soon nearly run down by three red fox pups.

you become involved with something to the point that it becomes an obsession (and every spring gobbler hunter I've ever met is obsessed with the sport) it becomes very personal.

As one fellow put it one rainy spring morning while we admired his 20-pound bird, "Your eyes open to a world that many hunters fail to experience." Unlike the stark deadness of late autumn and winter, the forest is anew and coming to life in the spring. I finally decided it was time to experience the season.

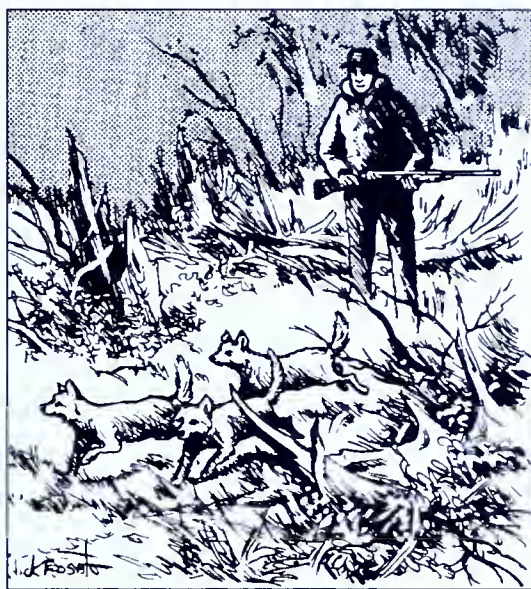
When I asked one turkey hunter if the bottom line was taking a bird, he pondered the question for a moment and replied, "Yeah, it's the bottom line; but you read through a lot of well-written paragraphs to get there."

Getting into the woods well before daybreak is a lesson every budding turkey hunter is taught. What he likely isn't taught, however, is that grouse will begin drumming well before the sun warms the morning air. And if a hunter takes his time, just as I did last spring, he may be able to count 12 different birds sounding off.

You won't learn, either, that while standing along the same hillside you occupied during a December deer season, in the sweetness of early morning dew, you can hear the village church bells echoing across the ridge and down through the valley. It's one of those things that seems to get bleached away in the coldness of winter, but spring gobbler hunters notice because it's part of their world.

On that same hillside, where I often stood for hours — and sometimes days — to get a glimpse of a whitetail, I never noticed the dogwoods, two of them, standing along the very path I walked to get to my deer stand.

I stopped and gently pulled a limb close, careful not to damage a single petal. How beautiful, this holiest of trees. I wondered how they had gone unnoticed in all my years afield, but I was thankful that this early spring hunt had brought them into



view, and immediately realized how much more enjoyable my next deer season on this ridge would be.

Walking along an old tram-road for another half-mile or so, I thought of my wife and daughter home asleep, just as I would be if not for turkey hunting. What a waste of a beautiful time of year, I thought, feeling ashamed that I had waited so long before becoming acquainted with the sport.

A sudden movement caught my eye just ahead of me where the logging road met the edge of a field. I stopped and watched for a moment and was soon nearly run down by three red fox pups. I'd walked between them and their den beneath an old fallen tree, and they were determined to get home — hunter standing in their way or not.

I could have easily caught any one of the little balls of fur, but I allowed them to run by. I was utterly amazed. I had never seen fox pups in the wild, but then I'd never spent time in the spring woods, either. It's another one of those things you aren't taught.

With so many things to see and learn while spring gobbler hunting, it's a wonder anyone gets in any actual hunting. It's a sport that I am thankful a handful of turkey hunters took the time to introduce me to. As far as reaching the bottom line, I never made it that far my first season. But, thus far, it's been one heck of a story.



I WANTED A DOG as a companion, but the only way I could talk my husband into getting one was by suggesting we get a hunting dog. In the end, we settled on a golden retriever that, sure enough, also deserted me in hunting season.

For the Love of Jake

By Linda Zeiber

THERE'S NO DOUBT my husband, Gerry, married me for love. To our marriage, I brought an 8-year-old Gremlin and a 14-year-old cat. He, on the other hand, brought equity in a home and, it seemed, enough fixings to stock a sporting goods store.

His all-purpose vehicle was a welcome addition in the transportation department, but Katie, the black domestic short-hair feline, never quite recovered from his arrival. Shortly after our marriage, Gerry was diagnosed with severe allergies and, you guessed it, cat was the worst of them.

Somehow, he managed to get by until Katie's demise at age 17. Fate had chosen that we be childless and, with no animals to tie us down, the outdoor equipment started to get a workout. We followed the mayfly hatches, fished the shores of the

Outer Banks, drifted for flounder in the bay.

I withdrew from the outdoor quests, however, when the seasons changed to wild fowl and mammals. I learned to cook all sorts of game, though, and loved it on the table. But I didn't want to hunt.

So as the hunting seasons came and went, I developed a growing need for something to nurture during my periods of "widowhood." I had grown up in a home with various dogs and desperately wanted one of my own.

With the allergies ever present, I set to researching breeds that inflicted the least sensitivity. To my chagrin, poodle and bichon friese were the two types for the allergic.

My husband is a man's man, and since he didn't want any animals at all, these

"refined species" presented him with the perfect excuse to say no.

Then I had a brainstorm. How about a hunting dog? Gerry thought it was worth considering, especially since he had recently developed a love of waterfowling. A good waterdog, he explained, would save him the trouble of toting waders along on his goose hunts. All of a sudden, he began researching dog breeds and where to go for the proper genetic background.

I was going to get my dog, but deep down I hoped it wouldn't pan out in the field so it could stay home with me. I figured that when Gerry saw how dog training would interfere with his now year-round sports ventures, the new pup would be be mine.

A Lab was a wise choice, but I lobbied for something cuter. Friends had recently bought a golden retriever, and as far as I was concerned, no breed could be more beautiful. Also, the only thing this golden retrieved was tennis balls — three at a time. Perfect. I started clipping want ads for golden pups. They were everywhere.

What I failed to consider is that my husband is Frank Buck, Ernest Hemingway and Robert Ruark all rolled into one. He began calling around to find the finest field stock. Field stock! I just wanted a sweet ol' dog to buy biscuits for, one to keep me company during archery season, small game season, waterfowl season, buck season, doe season and flintlock season.

I was rapidly losing control of my plan. I felt like I was becoming a victim of my own machinations. The one comfort was realizing that it was a long time between puppyhood and working the fields.

We found "Jake" outside of Danbury, CT. At seven weeks, he was the most adorable animal I'd ever seen. Later, we found his grandfather pictured on the cover plate of a hardbound book about goldens.

Jake was the only male in a litter of nine, born on the Fourth of July. The breeder gave us all sorts of information and advice to get us started on taking care of a

puppy. It's a good thing ignorance is bliss. Otherwise, we never would have driven home with that dog.

The pup threw up wood chips during the entire 5-hour return trip. Apparently, he had been consuming the puppy pen since birth. He put up such a howl between episodes of throwing up that we feared someone might have us arrested for cruelty to animals.

But, hey — this was Mom and Dad in the car. We were headed home as a new family — home where hundreds of dollars of equipment and a complete reference library on dogs were waiting. I had even viewed and reviewed a videotape from the vet on being the perfect puppy parents.

Home at last. Now life began in earnest. It took that 4-pound fur ball exactly 30 seconds to collapse the \$40 chicken wire pen we had constructed. Putting him in his new crate — supposedly a refuge of security in a strange place — was akin to sending him through the gates of purgatory. He would have nothing of it. He immediately baptized all of my carpets and began what was to be a year of raiding the laundry basket, looking for socks in need of ventilation holes.

The only successful part of my scheme was the part of having a dog to myself. For some reason, Jake was unresponsive to my husband. Perhaps it was because the breeder had been a woman and took great care to socialize all her pups.



WE FOUND JAKE in Connecticut. At seven weeks old, he was the most adorable animal I had ever seen.

Around the house, Jake followed me and gave Gerry a wide berth. Of course, this gained him no popularity points with the man who had envisioned autumn romps through the game lands in search of ducks and geese and grouse and pheasants. Gradually, the puppy's destructions irritated the king of the castle, a castle that was being destroyed wholesale.

With each passing day of "Rambo Pup," the bale of straw was getting smaller. My husband (and I) knew we were approaching the last one. Having eschewed the advice of keeping the dog in his crate while we worked, I opted for penning him in a hallway well-padded with newspaper.

I kept his crate in an open closet in the hall, should he ever decide to use the darned thing. Each day, upon my return from work, I rushed to his place of imprisonment, hoping to be the first one to discover the day's damage.

I was certain we had reached our darkest day when my husband needed his overcoat and, removing it from the closet, I discovered a hole through the drywall. Plaster dust covered the coat. This had to be Jake's and my secret or surely the dog was destined for a new residence.

At work the next day, I surveyed all my

friends for quick advice on drywall repair. With great amusement, they had been following our perils of raising the puppy and our bewilderment over the failure to head the little guy on the right path to adulthood.

In this instance, they encouraged me to be up front with Gerry about Jake's latest misdeed. They all knew Gerry to be a softy deep down. What they didn't know was the amount of blood, sweat and tears he had put into building our home. On more than one occasion he had reminded me that he hadn't "spent three years killing himself building a house for some dog to destroy."

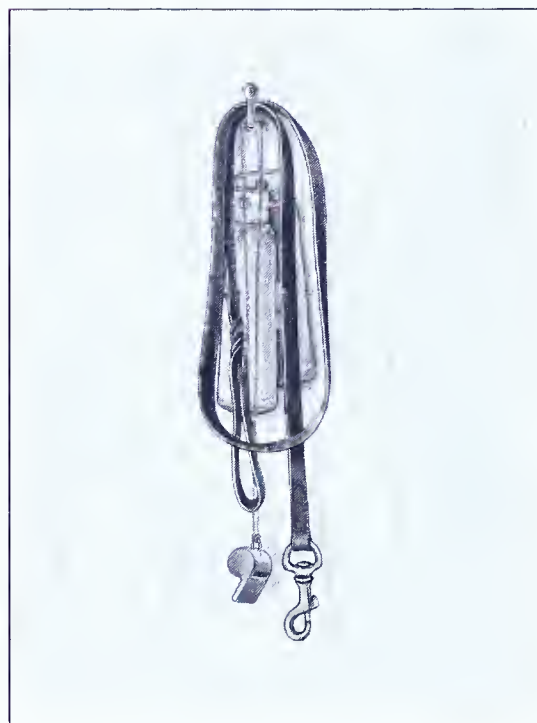
I lived with our secret for less than 24 hours because during the next day Jake ate another hole in the hallway drywall. I had no choice but to confess the pup's first indiscretion. It took a solid hour of tears to keep our family intact. I didn't know how I would accomplish it, but I promised to keep the dog from any further destruction.

In the ensuing months, we lost some electric cords and all of our blankets, but he stopped eating walls — largely because Jake was confined during the day to a section of the basement where my husband invited him to consume all the cement blocks his stomach could hold.

As weeks passed into months, things eventually fell in line. The pup was completely housebroken at four months of age, just as the books reported. The puppy fur was replaced with a silken coat of gold and his round belly disappeared. By his first birthday, Jake was a specimen of canine perfection.

During the off-season, Gerry began devouring the training books, and Jake began retrieving anything and everything. Field work began in early spring. At first I accompanied them. Then it seemed I began to interfere with the whistle commands and the hand signals. I was a distraction — a distraction!

Many of life's changes are so subtle they're undetectable until suddenly one



JAKE OFTEN SAT under the hook bearing the training dummies, a whistle, a leash — as if to stare the items down.

day we awaken to a new level of awareness. This was the case with Jake. He began recognizing a camouflage pattern on clothing. Often he sat in the basement directly under the hook bearing the training dummies, a whistle, a leash — as if to stare the items down.

The sound of the referee's whistle on Monday Night Football brought him to a sudden halt as he cocked his head quizzically at the television set. Fewer and fewer hours found him tagging along as I went about my daily chores.

One fall day the dog I had so desperately wanted for my own slipped to the other side. Hearing the four-wheel-drive pull into the garage, I dashed to the basement eager and anxious for news of Jake's first trip afield during small game season.

My eyes fell on the iridescent plumage in the game bag; my heart leapt and sank simultaneously. Yes, Jake put both of them up — the first ringnecks my husband had bagged in 10 years. While I love the taste of pheasant, it became obvious I was going to miss my dog during small game and waterfowl seasons.

One Sunday afternoon I rode along to a game lands for a walk with Jake and Gerry. Jake knew by the direction we were traveling that the trip was not just an errand but exercise. He squealed with enthusiasm until the car stopped. Bounding from the back, he took command of our walk as if to say: "C'mon, Mom. This is my turf."

The autumn breeze danced through the feathers of his legs and tail. A flash of burnished copper, he zigzagged through the budding winter wheat. The deeper the sun sank, the greater the halo grew around his body floating across the earth. To deny this to our dog would be like denying life itself. The bonding between the man and his dog was indeed complete. They worked as a team — each dependent on the other.

We do not vie for the love of Jake. We each play different roles in his life, but the role he plays in ours is identical. He loves both of us at all times in spite of ourselves. He asks for nothing but a bowl of food, hands on him at all times possible, and a field to explore. In return he gives to us a joy impossible to imagine without him.

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If I had a hammer...

BUILDING A NESTING DEVICE is a great springtime project for the whole family, and it can be a good classroom activity as well. Nesting devices are substitutes for natural cavities, upon which many species of wildlife depend. Cavities are used by 35 birds and 20 mammals in Pennsylvania. Most nesting devices require little in the way of tools or hardware: a saw, drill, hammer, nails and some hinges will handle nearly any task.

American kestrel

Our smallest falcon is commonly found in agricultural areas characterized by scattered woodlots, trees, pastures and hayfields. These conditions support insects and rodents, the kestrel's primary prey.

Locate the box along a fencerow between crop fields, in a meadow or similar open country. Place the box 10 to 30 feet high on a tree or pole.

Kestrels like a high perch near their box, so select a site within 100 to 200 yards of utility wires or a tall tree. The 3-inch diameter entrance should face in a south or easterly direction. The flight path to the entrance should be free of branches.

Place boxes in fall or late winter. Check boxes weekly to remove starling nesting material. If mammalian predators or competitors are a

problem, wrap a 3-foot band of metal flashing under the box.

Northern screech owl

Screech owls are small gray or reddish owls with ear tufts. About eight inches high, they look like miniature great horned owls. Screech owls are found along forested ridges, farm woodlots, orchards and wooded streams.

The nest box should be placed at least 10 feet high in a hardwood forest. Research in Louisiana suggests, "The ideal screech owl cavity would be a box located under a limb in a living tree with . . . [vines], and with the box entrance facing north."

To prevent use by squirrels, place the box on a pole with a predator guard; persistent starling control may be necessary.

The northern saw-whet, our smallest owl, may also use this box.

About the size of a robin, the northern saw-whet does not have ear tufts. Although rarely seen, it may be more common than formerly believed.

Preferred habitat includes coniferous, deciduous or mixed forest, woodlots and swamps. During the breeding season, this species is found in boreal wooded bogs with evergreen stands.

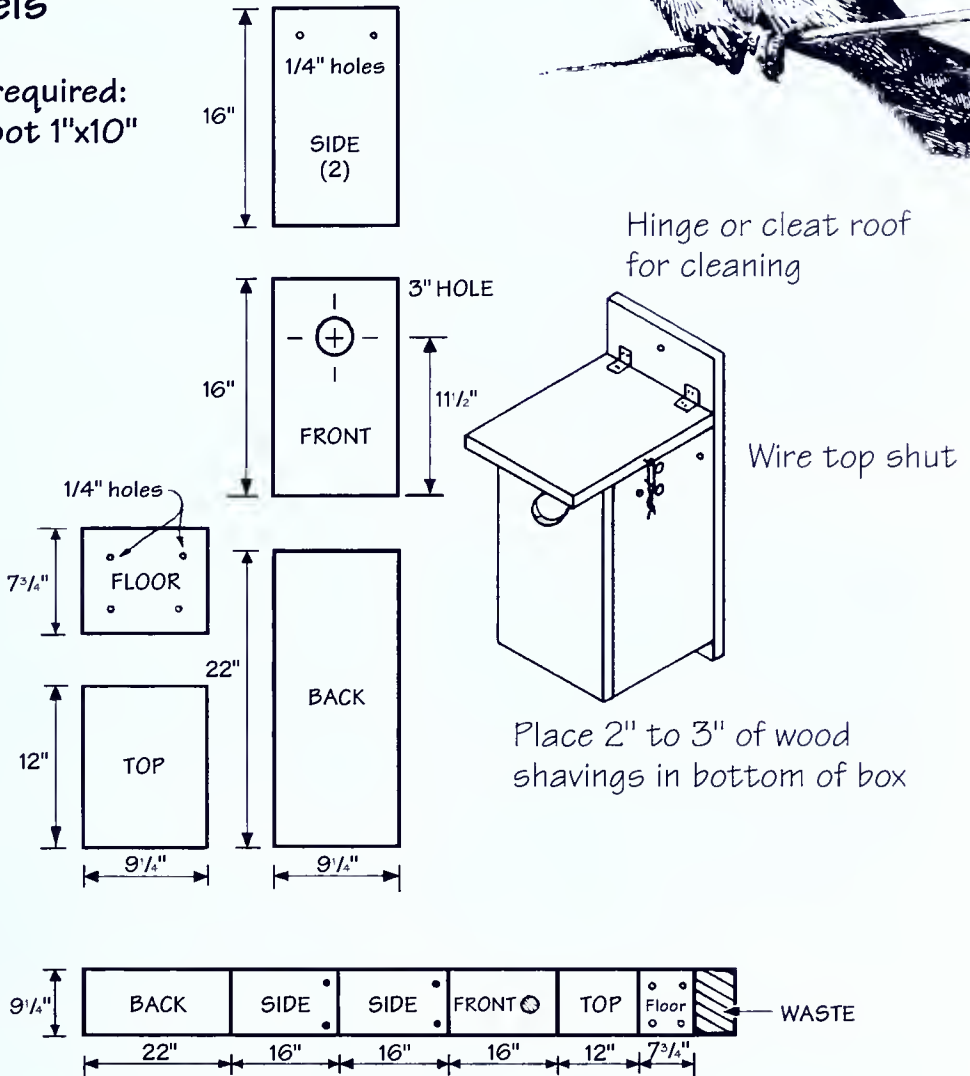
Northern and southern flying squirrels

The tiny nocturnal flying squirrels are seldom seen, even where they're common residents. They are found in a wide variety of habitats, ranging from northern coniferous forests to groves and woodlots.

It is probably not necessary to put out boxes specifically for flying squirrels because they readily use devices put out for other species.

Nest box for American kestrel, northern screech owl or flying squirrels

Lumber required:
One 8-foot 1"x10"



This plan (No. 14) was taken from *Woodworking for Wildlife*, which is available for \$3 delivered. Order from the Game Commission, Dept. MS, 2001 Elmerton Ave., Harrisburg, PA 17110-9797.



FIELD NOTES



Waste Not

Food & Cover Corps employee and Deputy Shorty Mack was working on the Conemaugh Flood Control property when he saw a truck pull over. He watched a man take out a full garbage bag and disappear into the woods. As Shorty approached to investigate, an elderly gentleman came out of the woods with the now empty bag. When Shorty asked what had become of the bag's contents, the man said he'd show him. It seems the man's butternut trees produce a surplus of nuts each year, and rather than waste them the man brings them to Conemaugh to feed the squirrels. — Information & Education Supervisor Barry K. Moore, Saltsburg.



Homewrecker

BRADFORD COUNTY — Last fall Burton Parks, a local farmer, baled his hay in those big round bales. In December he took his tractor out to bring back a bale for his livestock, and to his surprise, a bear was underneath the bale. The bear stood up, stretched and walked about 20 yards. Then it stopped and looked back at Burton, probably bewildered at the loss of its den. — WCO William A. Bower, Troy.

Federal Case

CUMBERLAND COUNTY — FBI agent Tom Koestner often travels through SGL 170 during his daily routine. One morning he saw a truck pass by with two men on the back tossing out concrete chunks. Tom followed them down the mountain and then pulled them over. Once he took down their identities, he gave the information to me so I could arrest them. It's about time we made a "federal case" out of illegal dumping. — WCO Timothy Grenoble, Carlisle.

Nighttime Encounter

PERRY COUNTY — On night patrol last November, I saw a moving shape I couldn't identify. As it came closer and was silhouetted against the sky, I at first thought it was a big fox. I turned on my lights to see it was a coyote with a beautiful coat and big, bushy tail. We looked at one another for a few seconds, and then the coyote trotted off — picking its way through a herd of deer that showed no alarm at its presence. — WCO Leroy Everett, Newport.

Counting Our Blessings

POTTER COUNTY — Some people complain about a lack of game, but in my short time here I've seen literally hundreds of deer. And as an avid turkey hunter, I've paid particular attention to the large flocks of birds I've spotted — including some outstanding longbeards. I see ducks on beaver ponds every day, along with the beavers. I've watched golden eagles and minks hunting pristine wild trout streams. Perhaps we should once again count our blessings for the abundance of wildlife we have. — WCO W.C. Ragosta, Coudersport.

Restoring the Faith

While stocking pheasants last November I saw five men hunting along a creek. One wasn't wearing the required fluorescent orange, and I motioned the man to go back to the road. I intended to tell him he had to quit hunting, and as I checked his license a van pulled up. The driver was wearing an orange hat, and when he got out he asked if that's why I was checking the hunter. I said yes; the driver then gave the guy a hat and enough fluorescent orange material to continue hunting. The two had never met. Incidents such as this restore one's faith in mankind. — LMO R.B. Belding, Waynesburg.

In Good Hands

MONROE COUNTY — Deputy Heil, a concerned sportsman and I followed a blood trail through the swamp on a cold, snowy night — guided by the beams of our flashlights. On the trail we got the story: three slobs, one carrying a bow and another with a .22 had killed a deer and were sneaking it out. We came across a gut pile, then the head and hide. The trail went cold a mile later where a vehicle had been parked. We haven't caught the poachers yet, but I know the sport is in good hands because of the dedication of the sportsman who helped us. — WCO Thomas M. Smith, Bartonsville.

No Substitute

ADAMS COUNTY — Last fall a squirrel hunter relied too much on his rifle scope and shot into a house, narrowly missing a person inside. I believe he was so focused on the squirrel in the scope's field of view that he failed to open both eyes to see the house — a short 80 yards behind his quarry. Another hunter used his scope to look at what he thought might be a deer only to find it was a person. That's inexcusable behavior — he should've used binoculars instead. Scopes are designed to provide a precise aiming point, and they are no substitute for eyes and common sense. — WCO Larry Haynes, Gettysburg.



No Vantage Point

LAWRENCE COUNTY — Some safety violations are darn near unbelievable. Deputies Navarra and Leonard arrested a hunter for having a loaded firearm on a vehicle. He was sitting on a lawn chair that was perched on the roof of his van. — WCO Gene W. Beaumont, New Castle.

Evade and Escape

LUZERNE COUNTY — District Magistrate Earl Gregory was watching some birds in his backyard when a hawk flew in and began chasing one. The hawk was closing in fast, but its quarry flew easily through the tangled branches of a bush for cover. The hawk slammed into the branches and fell onto the ground. After a bit, it regained its composure and flew away — stunned and still hungry. — WCO Donald R. Burchell, Dallas.

Either/Or

Last Thanksgiving morning I saw John Young of Milan and his dog out small game hunting. I checked with him later and asked if he'd had any luck, to which he replied he hadn't been carrying a gun. It seems his shotgun was in the room where his mother-in-law was sleeping, and he didn't want to disturb her. John is either a real sportsman or else he's scared of his mother-in-law. — LMO Chester J. Harris, Milan.

Good Job

SUSQUEHANNA COUNTY — A tip of the hat to 7-year-old Kristen Birchard, a second-grader at Lathrop Street School. She reminded hunters of the need to wear fluorescent orange in deer season by making several signs that read, "Deer don't wear orange! You do!" She placed the signs, which featured drawings of a brown deer, brown tree and orange hunter, in local restaurants. — WCO Charles J. Arcovitch, Kingsley.



No Luck

CLARION COUNTY — I just can't understand my lack of luck as a deer hunter. When I'm working, deer seem to be everywhere. I can't remember many days of my 17½-year career that I didn't see lots of deer or deer sign. Herds will trot by at close range, and then stop and stare as if they know I'm not hunting. But let me put on my hunting stuff and grab my flintlock, and long days pass by without even a glimpse of a white tail. — WCO Alan C. Scott, New Bethlehem.

Above and Beyond

WAYNE COUNTY — Many thanks to Lynne and Quinton Holl and Bruce Mackley for their persistence and help in recovering a bald eagle. Unfortunately, the bird died despite the aid of the Holls and Mr. Mackle. To them and other sportsmen and women who go out of their way to help wildlife, I offer my thanks. — WCO Donald R. Schauer, Honesdale.

Leave 'Em Alone

YORK COUNTY — Now that spring is close at hand, I want to drive home a message that I can't stress enough at the programs I give in my district: If you or someone you know comes across what appears to be an abandoned baby animal, leave it alone. In most cases, the mother is hiding close by or searching for food. It's her responsibility — not yours — to care for her young. And if something has happened to the mother, let nature take its course. It's not only the proper thing to do, it's the law. — WCO Timothy F. Smith, Hanover.

Renewable Resource

Sportsmen are often concerned over our timber harvests on game lands as the gypsy moth continues to claim our trees. Some believe we shouldn't cut trees unless they're dead. But cutting trees before they become heavily stressed allows sprouts to grow from the stumps. When we cut, we leave travel lanes and islands of uncut trees and food-producing shrubs, and regrowth in timber cuts is usually lush. Wildlife use these areas heavily, especially in winter. Timber is a renewable resource, and we make the best of it while at the same time providing optimum wildlife habitat. — LMO Keith E. Harbaugh, Meadville.

Or A Big Lawn?

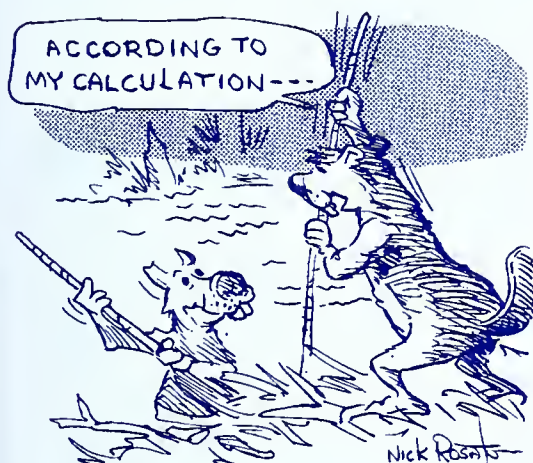
Habitat management work on SGL 234 was given a boost by the Royer Woodsman. This Chester County game land, located near Linfield, has many hedgerows that had matured beyond their usefulness to wildlife. The Royer, which is capable of shredding brush and saplings up to four inches in diameter, did more improvements in a few weeks than my Food & Cover Corps crews could've done by hand in a year. One man, watching the machine, asked Foreman Lee Hoffert if he could borrow it for yard work. If he needs the Royer to mow his lawn, his habitat chores are bigger than ours. — LMO Bruce C. Metz, Schwenksville.

Mmmm, Mmmm Good

TIOGA COUNTY — One of our responsibilities is investigating wildlife damage complaints. In my area, these usually involve deer, bear, beaver and raccoon. Last summer, though, I heard my first complaint involving turkey vultures. They'd been tearing into the white plastic that covers round hay bales, apparently because they had smelled the composting hay and thought it was a dead animal. — WCO Steve Gehringer, Mansfield.

Maybe

UNION COUNTY — Most folks noticed how few acorns there were last year, which was odd considering how many other food-producing trees had a good year. Michelle Zimmerman of Hanover suggested perhaps the previous drought caught up with last year's acorn crop. — WCO Bernie Schmader, Millmont.



Ramblin' Wrecks from Georgia Tech

JEFFERSON COUNTY — I was trying to keep a pair of beavers from damming a culvert pipe under a railroad track. Each time I tore out a section of the dam, they had it rebuilt by the next day. I even tried to fence them out, but that didn't work either. After about a week, I arrived one morning to find the beavers had located some steel reinforcing rods and had used them to rebuild the dam. I wonder where they got their engineering degrees. — WCO Brad Myers, Brookville.



Help Wanted

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY — While patrolling during antlerless season, I saw a man dressed in full orange — a rifle slung over his shoulder — raking leaves on his front lawn. I stopped to talk to him, and he said he always sees deer while doing yard work. His wife wanted him to finish the yard before he went hunting so he decided to be prepared. Later that day I saw a deer hanging from an oak in his yard; the time on the tag indicated the man shot it shortly after I left. I'll bet if he advertises that job next season he'll get a lot of takers. — WCO James M. Kazakavage, Sunbury.

We Do, Too

WYOMING COUNTY — A great horned owl had become tangled in kite string about 40 feet over Meshoppen Creek. A crowd gathered, and one man climbed a tree to rescue the owl. Before he could reach it, the kite string broke and the tangled bird dropped into the freezing water. Another man quickly waded in to get the owl, while others scrambled to find a burlap bag to put the bird in. I took the owl to licensed falconer Bob Astegher for rehabilitation. Considering that all of these people are hunters, animal rights activists should note that hunters love wildlife, too. — WCO William Wasserman, Tunkhannock.

People Make the Programs

LYCOMING COUNTY — Wildlife rehabilitators Tink and Ed Reish were doing their final survey of ospreys they'd hacked at Tioga-Hammond Dam when they were treated to the sight of four bald eagles. It's heartening to know our bald eagle reintroduction program is working, as are those of other states. The programs owe a lot to people like the Reishes. — WCO Dan Marks, Montoursville.

Blues Cure

BRADFORD COUNTY — It won't be long before peepers, a sure sign of spring, will be heard across the state. Soon after that the grouse will begin drumming and the turkeys will start gobbling. My field journal notes that I heard the first peepers last year on March 1; the first grouse in late February; and the first gobbler on March 6. I know for a fact the first sounds of spring help cure the winter blues. — WCO Richard P. Larnerd, Warren Center.



Mine, All Mine

MIFFLIN COUNTY — Last archery season, Terry Willoughby arrowed a buck and watched it fall. Before he and his companions could get to it, though, a bear claimed the prize. The men tried to chase the bear away, but they had no luck. The last time they saw the bear, it had the buck in its mouth and was dragging it over Jacks Mountain. Terry said he wasn't a bear hunter, but he decided to give it a try last season. — WCO Tim Marks, Milroy.

Welcome Change

BUTLER COUNTY — I was having trouble finding a house that had called in a complaint, so I stopped to ask directions. The man I spoke with had just moved from Michigan, and during our conversation he told me he was impressed with hunter behavior here — compared to what he'd experienced at home. We regularly deal with complaints, so it's nice to hear good reports. — WCO D.E. Hockenberry, East Butler.

Safe for the Night

For the fifth time in as many years, I watched a woodpecker enter a tree cavity late in the evening; I believe they roost in these cavities. They are logical places to escape the elements and avian predators, although a weasel would find a holed-up bird to be easy pickings. I suspect that various woodpecker species long ago learned that roosting in cavities puts survival odds in their favor. — LMO Ned Weston, West Sunbury.

Be Safe, Be Legal

CRAWFORD COUNTY — Spring gobbler season is almost here, and since many sportsmen are locating birds and practicing their calls, it's time for a safety reminder. Spring gobbler hunters are required to display 100 square inches of fluorescent orange on the head, chest or back — visible for 360 degrees — while moving. Make this season a safe and enjoyable one: wear your fluorescent orange. — WCO John McKellop III, Guys Mills.

Receptive

FORESTCOUNTY — During the past hunting season I heard a lot of comments regarding the "new" fluorescent orange law. Many people complained, saying they wouldn't be as successful dressed in orange as they had been in brown canvas. But once I explained the law to them, they were receptive. Many were glad we'd passed the law for small game and said there's no game worth getting shot for. — WCO Alfred N. Pedder, Marienville.



Hal Korber

ONE OF TWO helicopters used in the annual winter survey circles a small band of elk. Just above the chopper's designation number is a cow wearing a radio collar; 39 elk were fitted with telemetry gear as part of a censusing procedure designed to enhance survey accuracy.

Elk herd tops 200 animals

STATISTICS GATHERED during the Commission's annual winter elk census show the size of the herd continues to increase, a trend noted in recent years.

Completed in early February, the census indicated an estimated population of 205 elk on primary range in portions of Elk and Cameron counties. This is the highest population estimate in modern times.

The census was conducted through two aerial surveys. The first was held in late January, the second during the first week of February. One fixed-wing aircraft and two helicopters flew 25 survey units over 225 square miles of elk range.

In addition to Commission personnel, assistance was provided by the Department of Environmental Resources and the Bureau of Aviation. The Stackpole Carbon Corp. provided office space and hanger facilities at St. Marys Airport.

The key to the census was the location

and tracking of 39 elk equipped with radio collars.

The breakdown of the 205 elk by sex and age class included 36 branch-antlered bulls, 21 spike bulls, 114 adult cows and 34 calves.

Known mortality during the past year included five elk lost to brain worm and other diseases, two killed illegally, two



unknown, one roadkill and one for crop damage.

The agency's elk management program got a financial boost in the past several months, thanks to \$92,000 in donations from the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation.

The Commission received a \$50,000 check from the foundation last fall, and at RMEF's recent Eastern Rendezvous in Hershey, Executive Director Pete Duncan accepted another check for \$42,000.

RMEF donations have been used to acquire SGL 311 — Winslow Hill in Elk County — and will continue to be used for habitat improvement projects designed specifically for the elk.

Historically, Pennsylvania was home to eastern elk, but the animals were pushed out as the commonwealth became settled. The last native elk reputedly was killed east of St. Marys in 1867.

Rocky Mountain elk were first introduced here early this century: 177 elk were released from 1913 to 1926.

In recent years, Pennsylvania's elk herd has become popular among the state's wildlife watchers. Each fall,

during the mating season when the bulls are bugling, cars crowd the narrow dirt roads around Winslow Hill near the town of Benezette.

That popularity was also evident this year at the RMEF's Third Eastern Rendezvous. More than 5,000 elk enthusiasts packed the exhibit hall, talking to outfitters, looking at wildlife art and studying dozens of mounted species — including four record-book bulls. The eerie but majestic sound of bugling elk, coming both from callers and from running video presentations, filled the hall.

With eight RMEF chapters in Pennsylvania representing 2,100 members, it would seem state residents are interested in their elk herd and in the foundation's accomplishments. Not surprisingly, the foundation is planning to bring the Eastern Rendezvous back to Hershey in 1994.

Nationwide, the foundation boasts a membership of more than 66,000 members and 290 chapters. The organization spends about 70 cents of every dollar contributed on projects such as land acquisitions, easements and habitat improvements. — *Information Specialist Joe Kosack.*

'92 bear season results

The 1992 bear season resulted in the fourth largest take since statewide records began in 1915. A total of 1,589 bears were harvested during the Nov. 23-25 season. The largest harvest was 2,220 bears taken in 1989, followed by 1,687 in 1991 and 1,614 in 1988.

Forty-two of the state's 67 counties provided bears last year. A bear was taken in Lehigh County for the first time since at least 1949, when county records began. The three top counties were Lycoming, 139; Potter, 121; and Clinton, 118.

In 1992, about 68 percent (1,078) of the bear harvest was taken on the first day, 25 percent (403) on the

Table 1. Hunter success ratios, 1981-92

Year	No. of Hunters	Bear Harvest	Success Ratio
1981	72,532	819	1.1
1982	90,000	588	0.7
1983	100,000	1,528	1.5
1984	99,975	1,549	1.5
1985	87,439	1,029	1.2
1986	94,700	1,362	1.4
1987	92,051	1,560	1.7
1988	91,604	1,614	1.8
1989	92,468	2,220	2.4
1990	93,348	1,200	1.3
1991	89,452	1,687	1.9
1992	91,165	1,589	1.7
Avg.	91,228	1,395	1.4

Wildlife plantings on sale soon

The agency's seedling packet and seed mix sale kicks off this month. The seedling packet (three each of Callery pear, Norway spruce, American bittersweet, Japanese flowering crabapple and white pine and five mugho pine) and seed mix packet (a 10-pound bag of dwarf grain sorghum, millet, buckwheat and dwarf hybrid sunflower) are excellent for landowners wanting to provide food and cover for wildlife. The seedling packet sells for \$2, the seed mix for \$3. The following listing of sale locations, dates and times was available at press time. Watch local newspapers for possible additional sale sites and times.

NORTHWEST

Butler — Appalachian Trail Sporting Goods, Prospect, April 17, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Clearview Mall, Butler, April 16, 5 p.m. to 9 p.m., April 17, 1 p.m. to 9 p.m., April 18, 12 noon to 9 p.m.; Giant Eagle, Slippery Rock, April 17, 8:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.; **Crawford** — Black Ash Sportsman Club, Rt. 27, Guys Mills, April 25, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.; Pymatuning visitors center, Linesville, April 17-25, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.; Saegertown Plaza, Saegertown, April 17 to April 24, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Walmart of Meadville, Rt 322 & Rt 6, Meadville, April 17, 9 a.m. to 9 p.m.; **Erie** — Corry Plaza, Rt 6, Corry, April 23-25, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.; Millcreek Mall, Erie, April 17, 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.; **Jefferson** — Mike's Comet Market/Riverside Market, Brookville, April 16-17, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.; **Mercer** — Jamesway, Rt 358, Greenville, April 17, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.; **Venango** — Northwest Region Office, Franklin, April 19-23, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

SOUTHWEST

Allegheny — North Park Boathouse, North Park, April 17, 10 a.m. until sold out; **Beaver** — Beaver Valley Mall, Monaca, April 23-24, 10 a.m. to 9:30, April 25, 12 noon to 5 p.m.; **Washington** — Washington Mall, Washington, April 3, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.; **Westmoreland** — Southwest Region Office, Ligonier, April 10, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

NORTHCENTRAL

Centre — Scotia Range, April 6-9, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.; **Clearfield** — DuBois Mall, DuBois, April 23, 6 p.m. to 9 p.m., April 24, 10 a.m. to 8 p.m., April 25, noon to 4 p.m.; **Lycoming** — Lycoming Mall, Muncy, April 9, 5 p.m. to 9 p.m., April 10, 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Northcentral Region Office, Jersey Shore, April 10, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

SOUTHCENTRAL

Adams — Town Square, Gettysburg, April 23, 12 noon to 4 p.m., April 24, 9 a.m. to 12 noon; **Blair** — Logan Valley Mall, Altoona, April 24, 10 a.m. until sold out; **Cumberland** — Carlisle Plaza Mall, Carlisle, April 24, 9 a.m. until sold out; Karn's Market, Forge Road, Boiling Springs, April 17, 9 a.m. until sold out; Shermansdale Fire Co, Rt 34, April 17-18, All Day; **Franklin** — First United Methodist Church Youth Group, 225 S. 2nd St., Chambersburg, April 24, 8 a.m. to 2 p.m.; **Huntingdon** — Southcentral Region Office, Huntingdon, April 23, 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., April 24, 10 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

NORTHEAST

Bradford — Troy and Canton, April 23-24, 10 a.m.; **Luzerne** — Northeast Region Office, Dallas, April 23; Susquehanna Riverlands, Berwick, April 24,

1 p.m.; **Monroe** — Stroud Mall, April 23-24, 10 a.m.; **Montour** — Montour Preserve, April 24, 11 a.m.; **Sullivan** — Dushore, April 24, 10 a.m.; **Susquehanna** — Hallstead, April 23-24, 10 a.m.

SOUTHEAST

Berks — Southeast Region Office, Reading, April 12-16, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.; **Dauphin** — Mummert's Texaco, 3801 Derry St., Harrisburg, April 16, 9 a.m. to 9 p.m., April 17, 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., Boscov's, Colonial Park Mall, Harrisburg, April 16-17, 10 a.m. to 9 p.m., April 18, 12 to 6 p.m.; Commission Headquarters, 2001 Elmerton Ave., Harrisburg, April 19-23, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.; **Lancaster** — Middle Creek Wildlife Management Area, April 16-17, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., April 18, 12 to 5 p.m.; Musser's Market, April 22-23, 5 p.m. to 9 p.m., April 24, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.; **Montgomery** — Ambassador College, Eastern Game Farm, Schwenksville, April 4, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.; Zern's Farmers Market, Gilbertsville, April 17, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Middle Creek, Pymatuning lecture series begin

Lectures at the Middle Creek Wildlife Management Area Visitors Center, located near Kleinfeltersville, begin at 7:30 p.m.

This year's series begins with "Pennsylvania's Black Bear" by PGC Biologist Gary Alt, April 7-8. On April 21-22, WCO George Mock will speak on "Pennsylvania Mountain Man."

Lectures at the Pymatuning Wildlife Management Area Visitors Cen-

ter, located near Linesville, begin at 2 p.m.

Pymatuning starts its season on March 20 with "Eastern Bluebirds" by WCO Jack Farster. "Wild Turkey" will be WCO David Beinhaur's topic on April 17.

People with disabilities who require special assistance should call the appropriate region office. The toll-free numbers are listed elsewhere in this issue.

First-timers should take hunter-ed early

Due to changes in the antlerless license application process, it's important for first-time hunters to take the required Hunter-Trapper Education Course as early as possible.

The timetable for antlerless license application has been pushed back to Aug. 2 this year. A county-specific antlerless license is now required to

harvest an antlerless deer in all deer seasons except flintlock.

Muzzleloader hunters may still take an antlerless deer statewide during flintlock season; muzzleloading stamps must be purchased by July 31.

Contact the region office in your area for information on hunter-ed classes.

Northcentral Region hosts photo workshop

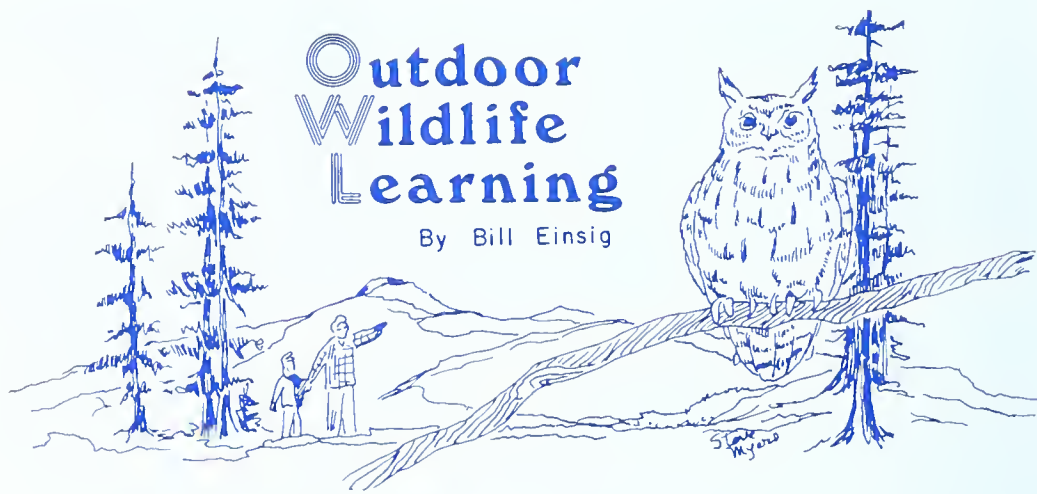
A wildlife and outdoor photography workshop will be presented at the Northcentral Region office in Jersey Shore on March 21. The workshop will run from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m.

The session will include seminars on choosing equipment, getting close to wildlife, and photo composition. Attendees will also be instructed in

professional methods and tips, and advice from photo contest judges.

While the workshop is intended primarily for amateurs, everyone is welcome. For registration information, call (717) 398-4744.

People with disabilities who require special assistance should call the number above.



A Hawk Mountain Field Trip

HAWK MOUNTAIN Sanctuary stretches along the Kittatinny Ridge on the border of Berks and Schuylkill counties. For nearly 60 years, the sanctuary has been the premier vantage point for monitoring fall hawk migrations.

Geologic and atmospheric factors conspire to form a corridor of rising air columns the soaring birds use to glide along Pennsylvania's ridge and valley system. At the sanctuary, the Kittatinny kicks out into a distinct northward kink so that birds gliding south pass close to the ridge itself.

Early in this century, raptors were considered vermin, animals that depleted game species and raided flocks of domestic fowl on family farms. They were rarely watched with the awe and respect we give them today. Instead, they were intently watched over the barrel of a shotgun in hopes they would soar within shooting range — and at Hawk Mountain, they did just that.

Photos taken in the 1930s show gunners surrounded by dozens of dead hawks they had shot as the birds passed close to the ridge. It's easy, but not accurate, to view these shooters as wanton killers out to down as many hawks as possible. Ironi-

cally, these people firmly believed they were performing a public service by removing predators and, thereby, helping other kinds of wildlife.

Those who wait on the ridge today, however, come armed with spotting scopes, binoculars and cameras. State and federal laws now protect raptors, and whole new generations of nature lovers have grown to respect and marvel at the way natural selection has equipped these birds for survival.

Hawk Mountain Sanctuary has been a leader in this educational effort that has, within just a few decades, dramatically changed the public opinion of raptors.

Students on the Mountain

This historic blend of natural history, changing human perspective and environmental action make Hawk Mountain a unique field trip site for school groups. But while there is much we can all learn at the sanctuary, it is, in fact, not a trip for all students nor for every teacher.

Teachers approach field trips in different ways. Many reserve the big trip for an end of the year reward to the students for

having endured the previous months. This fun-and-games approach frequently leads to the kids thinking the field trip is a time to cut loose and have some fun. That kind of attitude is not appropriate for Hawk Mountain.

Other teachers view their field trips as learning experiences independent of classroom work. They depend solely on the leadership of an interpreter at the site to direct their experience and, therefore, do little to prepare their students for the trip or to incorporate the learning experience into their curricula upon return to school. That, too, is not the best way to use Hawk Mountain.

Visiting the Mountain with students requires a serious interest in hawk migration and thorough preparation. Students on the lookouts are expected to watch for hawks, to look with keen eyes for telltale clues, to gather information. They should blend in with the other hawk watchers who may have traveled great distances to share the annual migration at this popular lookout. Simply put, student groups need a level of maturity and knowledge to use Hawk Mountain as it should be used.

Nearly 20 years ago, I visited Hawk Mountain for the first time with high school students. At that time, school groups were usually asked to use a less popular lookout away from the well-known North and South lookouts where serious adults gathered.

But my group was always small, and I wanted my students to have the experience of interacting with the adults so, in one way or another, we avoided the "student" area and worked our way to the North Lookout.

On one of those trips, I had several students who . . . well, let's say, had little interest in school. They protested the trip and saw no value in "sitting on a bunch of rocks looking at dumb birds." In those days, shoulder-length hair, denim jeans, denim jackets, headbands, heavy leather boots and heavy trucker-style key chains were all symbols of a group of students that did not necessarily hold education in very high esteem. Some of them had report cards that contained straight "Fs," some-

thing that actually takes some effort to accomplish.

They followed my ground rules, however, and our visit to the mountain was a good one. I tried to enjoy it myself, too, but being the "mother hen" of a group of teens, I tried to keep an eye on everyone and answer questions. But when it came time to leave, I couldn't find my three "star" pupils. Did they leave without telling me? Did they skip out for a smoke? Were they doing something that would make me banned from Hawk Mountain for life?

Then I saw them. Perched on the lower rocks of the lookout, they flanked a gray-haired grandmother — a classic bird watcher with binoculars in her frail hands and notebook on her lap. Fearing she was about to be mugged, or at least hassled, I approached the little group to rescue her and retrieve my students. But then I heard one of the boys yell, "There goes another TV (hawk watchers' label for turkey vulture)." Another shouted, "There's a broadwing over the Pinnacle."

Were these my students? I wondered. They were, and they weren't ready to leave because their new friends had infected them with the contagious thrill of hawk watching. Finally, when they realized the time and thought of the trip ahead of us, they said goodbye with a tender respect and gratitude I had never seen before.

For a few brief moments, those boys had forgotten their negative views of life and society and had accepted new roles. The Mountain, and her people, do that because it is a special place.

Some Field Trip Hints

The Sanctuary does offer guided programs where students work with staff naturalists, but times are limited. The programs vary in length from 2½ to 3½ hours and typically include a live raptor demonstration, slide show and a hike. Because of limited availability during the prime months of October and May, guided programs must be scheduled four to six months in advance.

Self-guided groups can visit the Sanctuary and conduct their own programs at reduced rates. Group rates are \$1 per

student and \$2.50 per adult. Group size is limited to a maximum of 50 and there is a surcharge of \$1 for every person over 30.

In addition to the North and South lookouts, where most of the action takes place, Hawk Mountain also has a beautiful new visitor center with a number of interactive exhibits, a gift shop and a dramatic collection of mounted raptors on the wing. There is a small indoor observation area that overlooks an outdoor bird feeding area and a model of backyard landscaping that combines native plants and flowing water to form inviting wild habitat.

There are no picnic facilities, snack bars or cafeterias, so visiting groups have to bring their own lunches and eat at the lookouts, the amphitheater or in their own bus. Restrooms are conveniently located at the center and at the lookouts.

Students should bring binoculars, a field guide, notebook and backpack. It's significantly cooler and windier high on the mountain, so visitors should dress in layers that can be added or shed as needed. Also, the trails are very rocky in places; durable shoes that give strong support to the ankles and soles are highly recommended.

Hawk Mountain offers a Teacher Packet filled with a variety of materials and activi-

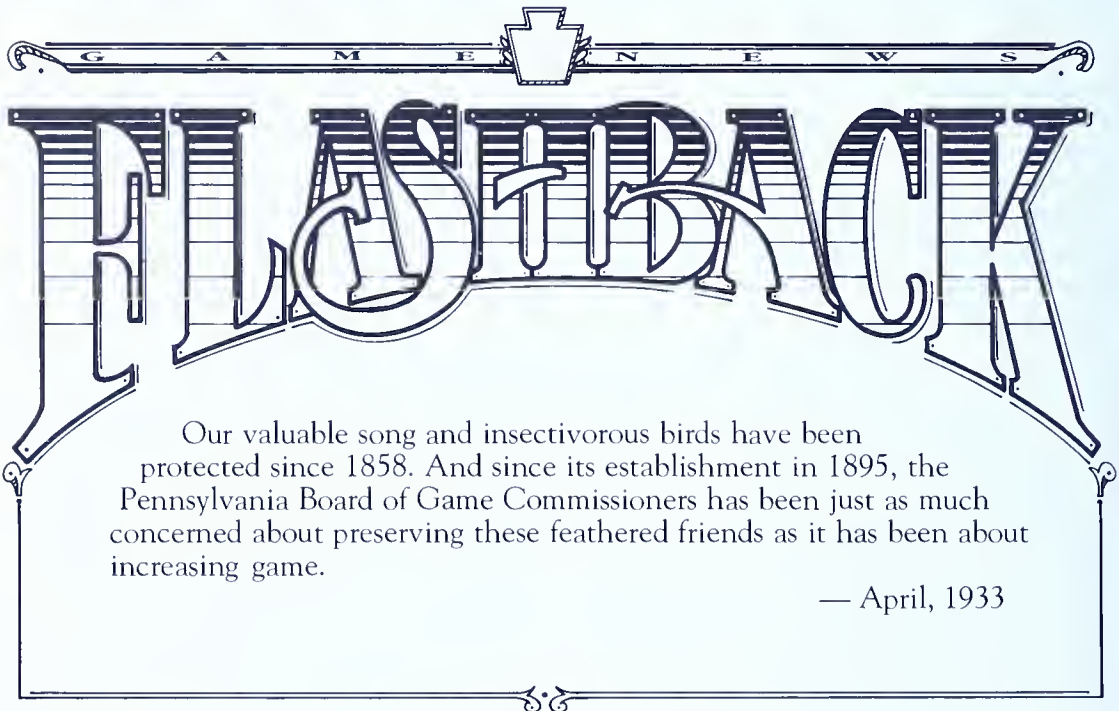
Have a question about the natural world for Mr. OWL to answer? Send them to Mr. OWL, Game News, 2001 Elmerton Ave., Harrisburg, PA 17110-9797.

ties intended to prepare visiting students for their work at the sanctuary. Actually, there is a Fall Packet that focuses on migration and a Spring Packet that concentrates on Appalachian ecology. Each packet costs \$5.

Finally, teachers should consider a pre-trip visit without students to explore the sanctuary and see what it has to offer. Walk to the lookouts and estimate how long your students will be able to sit and watch hawks before they become bored and ready for a new activity.

Take the time to prepare activities to focus their attention inside the visitor center. There's much to see, but without some guidance and a bit of organization they will miss most of it.

For more information about group visits and current rates and dates, contact the Group Coordinator, Hawk Mountain Sanctuary, RR 2, Box 191, Kempton, PA 19529-9449, or call (215) 756-6961.



Our valuable song and insectivorous birds have been protected since 1858. And since its establishment in 1895, the Pennsylvania Board of Game Commissioners has been just as much concerned about preserving these feathered friends as it has been about increasing game.

— April, 1933

The Near & Far of It

I HAVE HUNTED both near and far. Literally. I've taken my gun and stepped out my back door into the woods, and I've traveled many hours before hunting in distant forests. Truthfully, I don't know which type of hunting I like best. Both have good points and bad. What do you think?

Advantages of Hunting Near

My favorite reason for hunting close to home is getting that extra hour or two of sleep. With the coffee pot ready to plug in, hunting clothes and equipment all set out, I can breakfast and be dressed and outdoors in half an hour. That means I can sleep until half an hour before starting time. What bliss.

Hunting near home, I can stop back at the house at noon for a real lunch, even hot soup and a hamburger. No squashed sandwiches in the game pouch, no mashed chocolate bars mixed with lint in a coat pocket.

If I go back for lunch, I can change clothes to get warm and dry again, or switch to lighter togs if the day's turned unseasonably hot.

In fact, I can switch to a whole new type of hunting regalia and go after another type of game. I can opt to give up on upland and get into hip boots for jump-shooting ducks in the bottomland.

Or I can take a nap, on a comfortable couch, and go back into the woods, refreshed, for those prime last few hours.

If I bag game early in the day, I can care for it properly, skin and refrigerate it, or clean and hang it in the cool shed. I also have the time to pick out and save the feathers and fur I'll want later for tying trout flies. Dragging and carrying are short if I hunt out my back door.

Hunting near home saves on gas and vehicle maintenance, not to mention "fender-bender" repair bills incurred going to and from distant hunting grounds. With-



out getting into backwoods mud up to the windows, my piggy bank gets the spare quarters instead of the local car wash.

Unexpected half days off, early quits, or late starts at work can be turned into hours spent afield instead of painting the spare room or fixing the sink. When I hunt close to home, the sport is available as soon as I am. The odd moments grabbed that way can account for a lot of additional game taken through the years.

Another View...

by Linda Steiner

The Working Woman's Italian Venison Steak

Ingredients:

1 can stewing tomatoes
1 small can tomato sauce
1/3 cup catsup
2 tbs. Worcestershire sauce
2 tbs. brown sugar
2 tbs. lemon juice concentrate
2 medium size green bell
pepper cut into large chunks
1 small can tomato paste

Pour sauce mixture into crockpot before going to work in the morning. Add two to three pounds steak or six to eight chops and turn to low, allowing to simmer eight hours. Serve with buttered rice, a lemon jello salad (with celery pieces and cream cheese), green beans and hot brown bread.

From Pennsylvania Game Cookbook, available from the Game Commission, Dept. MS, 2001 Elmerton Ave., Harrisburg, PA 17110-9797. Cost is \$4, delivered.

Bagging game close to the house helps solve wildlife damage problems. After all, those rabbits and deer fattened themselves at night on my garden and shrubbery. What's more fitting than that I should enjoy the harvest I helped to grow?

Hunting close to home feels like the "olden days," when most of Pennsylvania was rural, and wild lands and wildlife were out everyone's back door. It's something to take advantage of, if you still have it, before it's gone.

Disadvantages to Hunting Near

The main problem with hunting close to home is that I feel I haven't gotten away. There's no excuse for not keeping commitments, returning that phone call, or fixing that leaky faucet. You're home to take that call back to work, and would feel guilty if you missed the overtime. It's too easy to get

caught up in "other things to do on a day off" instead of the really important one, going hunting.

When I know all I have to do is step out the door to hunt, it's too easy to roll over and go back to sleep for another hour or two. When the alarm rings, it doesn't mean as much as when I have a long drive ahead of me. The problem with hitting the alarm clock's snooze button is that I wind up missing that important first hour of daylight.

Hunting near home, it's often much too tempting to go back to the house throughout the day. I find I spend too much time at home, instead of all day in the woods. The only game in my kitchen is already dead, so I'm not helping myself by being there. As for afternoon naps on the couch, although inviting, they're also a good way to miss the prime late afternoon hunting hours.

When going back to the house at noon, I have to cook that soup and hamburger myself. I can't enjoy the luxury of someone else preparing the food and serving me, the way I can at a distant diner. If I want homemade pie a la mode, I have to bake it myself. What kind of a treat is that?

Advantages to Hunting Far

By traveling away from home, the hunt becomes an adventure, a day or a week's vacation, which requires poring over maps, evenings of pre-hunt planning, all that going-away fun stuff. Hunting far adds the joy of anticipation of embarking on "the big trip."

Journeying to hunt makes the experience like returning to the "olden days" when pursuing game required serious preparation for a long stay, a long road, and possibly adverse conditions and animals. It's not quite Jeremiah Johnson, but I can always dream.

In distant locales, there's often the chance of bagging or watching wild animals that aren't found near home. Without leaving Pennsylvania's borders, I can shoot a bear, shotgun bobwhite quail, see a raven, a bobcat or a bull elk.

I also get to gaze on scenery foreign to the view out my window, like hemlock

studded mountains or picturesque farm fields.

Since my kitchen is miles away, I often get to eat the “home-cooked” special and the pie a la mode at the country diner. Somehow, hunting dogs have a way of getting to the squashed packed sandwiches. Too bad.

The day is entirely mine when I’m far from home. There’s no chance of being waylaid by household chores, commitments or job-related problems. I have the perfect excuse for spending the day on myself. I’m so far away, the work I have to do has no choice but to wait. I might as well go hunting.

Disadvantages to Hunting Far

The worst part of hunting far away is having to get up so early. No one is ever able to get enough sleep the night before. Who can go to bed at eight o’clock? When the alarm rings, I have to rise when the rest of the world is just turning over for another four. By the time the sun comes up and I reach my destination, I’ve already put in a half day.

Another problem is getting home late. It’s not that I am so much sleepy, as I’m too tired for the chores I have to do — like unpacking the car, feeding the dog, cleaning the guns, cleaning the game. If I’m lucky, I haven’t shot anything and can save at least two steps.

Unless I pack for every contingency,

there’s always something I need or would like to have that I left at home. I don’t take rubber boots, and it begins to pour. Or the temperature unexpectedly plummets, and my wool shirts are in my closet. I decide I’d rather be grouse hunting than bowhunting, and my side-by-side’s home in the case. I’m limited to what I carried in the car and committed for the rest of the stay.

If I get sleepy in mid-afternoon, I have no pillowed couch. I have to nap on a cramped car seat, or on the damp, stick-strewn, spider-infested ground, and keep one eye open.

Hunting miles from home is expensive: restaurant meals, motels, gas, additional wear and tear on vehicles. Then there’s the possibility of accident and cost of repair. I’ve paid several times to have the car towed when I ventured just a bit too far “back in” and ended up “off road.”

Long trips aren’t spontaneous. Going to distant hotspots is out of the question when the boss says to knock off work an hour early. It takes twice that just to get there. Since a spur-of-the-moment hunt isn’t possible, I feel I might as well take that wrench to the sink or paint brush to the wall.

Hunting near and far? There’s really no choosing between them. The advantages and detriments stack up about even. The solution is to find time for both, make the best of either, and be happy when you can get hunting at all.

FEATURED on this month’s cover is a photograph taken last March by Clinton County WCO John Wasserman. John found this exceptionally large bobcat near Shintown Run. Moments after this stunning photograph was taken, John reports, the secretive feline disappeared inside the large outcropping behind it. For information on ordering high quality color prints of this photo, shown in its entirety here, write to John at 547 Farwell Ave., Renovo, PA 17764.



*"O, what men dare do!
What men may do!
What men daily do,
not knowing what they do."
— Shakespeare, "Much Ado About
Nothing"*

FOR AS LONG as I remember, March has been peculiar. It is a transitional time of the year, a period when winter and spring seem constantly sparring — each testing the other, struggling to endure. I never know what to expect in March; it can be mild and gentle for days on end, and then, just when spring seems to have finally settled in, winter delivers a knock-out punch.

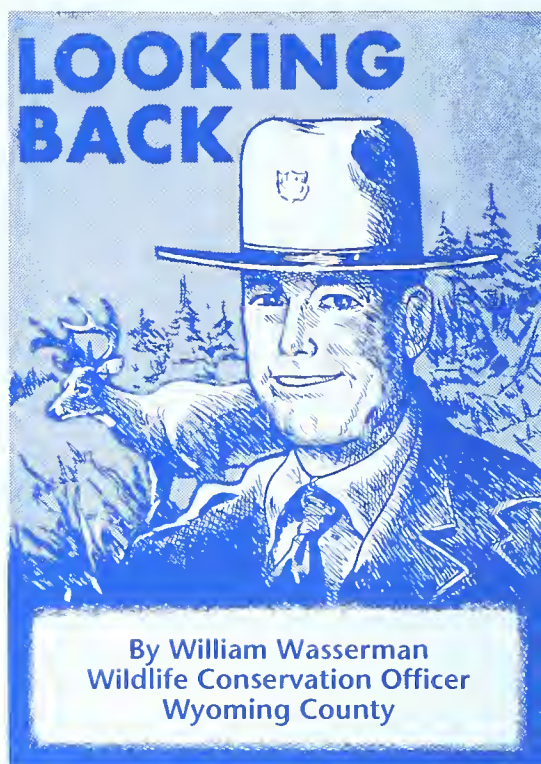
Like the winds of March, a conservation officer's job can be just as capricious this time of year. Bear and beaver complaints start filtering in, and many officers begin preparing traps to remove the more troublesome animals. Upcoming court cases from the past hunting season are prepared for, arrest warrants are served, public meetings and programs increase; the list goes on.

In the more populated districts, nuisance wildlife complaints begin to escalate. These range from people being bothered by chipmunks and songbirds to more legitimate complaints such as deer trapped in buildings.

During my 13 years in Montgomery and Philadelphia counties, I experienced many dilemmas with deer in places they didn't belong. None of these episodes were pleasant — many were dangerous.

I'm convinced that the primary reason deer show up in towns is because dogs chase them there. Even in Philadelphia, where a surprisingly large deer population exists (more than 190 killed in 1991 by motor vehicles), whitetails seldom venture far from wooded areas. It is on those rare instances when they do that the WCO is called in.

I remember an incident where a deer jumped through the window of a home near a city park and landed in bed with



an elderly couple. It was 2 a.m. when Deputy Harry Scuron's telephone call woke me from a dead sleep. "Bill, it's Harry. I have a problem," he said grimly.

"What is it, Harry," I mumbled.

"I'm in a house and there's a deer inside. You should see the place. The television is in pieces, lights are knocked over — the house looks ransacked."

"What deer." I croaked. "Where are you?"

"I'm in Philadelphia. A deer jumped through a window and it's in the living room."

"Anybody hurt?" I asked anxiously.

"Two people went to the hospital. The deer has a broken leg, too, and I'm afraid it's about to go on another rampage. Do you have a tranquilizer gun?"

"It's in the shop for repairs," I said in apologetic tones. "But the deer has to be stopped before it causes more damage or injures anybody else. Use your sidearm."

"Okay, Bill, I'll take care of it." Harry said assuredly. It was a difficult situation, but Deputy Scuron managed to put the deer down with one well-placed shot.

I remember another incident in which a deer jumped a chain link fence and became trapped inside a storage yard for a propane gas company. I happened to be nearby when the call came over my radio, so I got to the scene right away. I'd been out all day with a work crew capturing nuisance geese, and several of the men accompanied me to the yard.

The terrified deer was running back and forth in a futile attempt to escape. Although the fence was only five feet high, the crazed whitetail, blind with panic, was oblivious of its ability to easily hurdle the meager barricade.

Once again I was without a tranquilizer gun. I had foolishly left it home, thinking I wouldn't need it on a day set aside to capture nuisance geese. When I first entered the yard I looked for a gate I could open to free the deer. Unfortunately, the only outlet was at the opposite end from the trapped whitetail and led directly onto a highway.

The deer appeared to be a yearling, perhaps 70 pounds, so I thought I could overpower it. I decided to try to wrestle the deer to the ground and hog-tie it. Having men with me to jump in and help constrain the animal made the idea seem worthwhile.

The deer was now running at full speed until it smashed into the side of the fence, at which point it would immediately turn, charge in the opposite direction, and smash into the other side.

I cautiously approached the frightened animal and concealed myself behind a thick row of shrubbery several feet from the fence. Twice the deer passed within inches of me before I was set. Then, as it came by for the third time, I lunged from my cover and grabbed it. But the deer was far more powerful than I anticipated and my arms ricocheted back from its tightly

muscled body. Tackling a 250-pound linebacker would have been a breeze compared to the frantic whitetail.

Suddenly the deer bolted toward the opposite end of the yard, but it was blocked by hundreds of 4-foot-high gas cylinders lined in long rows. The fleeing deer attempted to hurdle them but made it only halfway across before plunging into the steel bottles, causing them to topple in every direction like dominos. Unable to gain solid footing on the rounded surfaces, the deer floundered helplessly.

Seeing an opportunity to intercept the laboring whitetail, several of us waded into the heavy steel cylinders, wrestled the bewildered animal to the ground and quickly hog-tied it.

With the deer securely hobbled we carried it safely to a vehicle and transported it, unscathed, to more suitable habitat.

Of all my escapades with vagabond deer, one stands out indelibly in my mind. It was a Sunday afternoon during March — that fickle time of year when anything can happen — when I received a call about a deer trapped inside a car dealership. I usually take Sundays off, but every conservation officer soon learns how scheduled days off can turn out in this line of work.

I jumped into my uniform, raced out the front door and climbed into my truck. Having since learned my lesson about getting caught without a tranquilizer gun, I now carried one in my vehicle at all times. Of course, the mere fact that one was at my disposal didn't necessarily ensure success.

Unlike the countless number of television programs depicting everything from small mammals to rampaging elephants being subdued instantly by one of these dart flinging instruments, tranquilizer guns aren't all they're cracked up to be.

Whenever I'm responding to an incident involving a deer being someplace it shouldn't, I say a little prayer that it's gone by the time I arrive. I can't remember a single time

when it worked, but I said one anyway as I rolled into the small town of Hatboro.

As I stepped out of my Blazer I was greeted by Bill Wallace. Bill has a special permit allowing him to remove nuisance wildlife for the general public. Because he deals with wildlife daily, someone had summoned him to the scene as well.

Bill had been waiting for me to arrive. "I thought I'd hang around in case you wanted some help," he said.

"Thanks, Bill," I replied. "Let's take a look inside."

I grabbed my tranquilizer rifle and related equipment from my vehicle and walked toward the car dealership with Bill. A large crowd had gathered and several police officers were standing by. I noticed a window missing from the garage door leading into the building.

"Is that how the deer got inside?" I asked a policeman.

"Can you believe it?" he said in amazement. "I don't know how an animal that big could've fit through."

I had to agree. The window didn't look big enough for a deer to even squeeze through, let alone make it on a flying leap. "If the deer got in this way it might decide to jump back out. Better keep the crowd away while we're inside," I cautioned.

"No problem," the officer replied in a dry tone of confidence.

Bill and I entered through the front door and immediately spotted the deer. It was in the back of the building, eyeing us nervously. To my dismay, the garage contained a number of vehicles. Many of them looked brand new, and the notion that a spooked deer could easily damage them descended upon me like a dark cloud.

My mind raced ahead, calibrating every negative aspect of the gauntlet Bill and I were facing: A few banged up vehicles could tally a sizable amount of money, but if the deer managed to leap outside through a garage window, innocent bystanders could be injured or an accident might occur. York Road



Question

May I pick up a deer accidentally killed by a motor vehicle?

Answer

A Pennsylvania resident may immediately take possession and transport the deer to a place of safekeeping within the commonwealth. The person taking possession must then apply for a permit within 24 hours.

passed within a few yards of the building and was heavily traveled.

"Bill, I need you over by the garage door," I directed. "If the deer comes your way, wave your arms and yell to keep it from jumping out through another window and hurting somebody."

"You got it," Bill said eagerly, quickly placing himself several feet in front of the door.

I set a tackle box full of darts and equipment on a nearby desk, and popped it open. Each dart has to be carefully prepared before loading it into the rifle. It is a tedious procedure requiring the proper mix of drugs.

With a syringe, I carefully withdrew a measured amount of a muscle relaxant from a bottle and then injected it into the hollow needle of my dart. Next, I affixed a rubber cap on the needle to retain the substance, and used another syringe to carefully inject air into the opposite end of the dart. Finally, I screwed on a feathered tailpiece and placed the missile into the chamber of my rifle.

The tranquilizer rifle had a dial mounted to the chamber with a series of numbers on it. Each number represented the approximate distance the dart was supposed to travel. I adjusted

the dial for close range and walked slowly toward the deer.

Suddenly the whitetail bolted toward several parked cars. Fearing it might damage them, I lurched forward and attempted to head it off. But the move turned the deer toward the garage door and Bill Wallace. I quickly fired my rifle, but the dart only skimmed under the deer as it charged past me.

Bill began waving his arms wildly and shouted an impressive Neanderthal roar as the frantic deer came right at him. Instead of turning back, the deer attempted to jump over Bill. But the deer lost its footing on the smooth concrete floor and came crashing down on top of him. Both front legs landed across Bill's shoulders, while the deer's hind legs touched ground in front of him, creating the bizarre image that they were about to mambo.

Suddenly the bewildered deer began pummeling its hooves against Bill's legs in a furious attempt to climb over him. Bill tried to stay upright, but the indomitable whitetail caused him to topple helplessly onto the floor and the deer's full weight came down on top of him.

Fortunately, the deer promptly leaped off Bill, but then it immediately charged toward the garage door. Again and again the crazed deer smashed into the bottom windows, only to bounce back each time. Made of hardened plexiglass, the windows were impossible to penetrate.

Bill got to his feet and both of us lunged for the deer, but it saw us coming and sprinted back to the opposite end of the garage. Three windows were all but covered with blood, and I saw more blood on the deer's face as it ran by me.

I asked Bill if he was okay. He was, and we decided to try the same thing again. Actually there wasn't anything else we could do, short of killing the deer, and neither us wanted that.

I went back to my tackle box, prepared another dart and loaded it. This time I adjusted it to shoot higher.

Once more I slowly approached the trapped whitetail, hoping it would stand still long enough for me to get a decent shot. But just as I took aim, the deer again bolted toward the garage door. I fired from the hip as the animal passed within a few feet of me, and I then stood dumbfounded as the dart bounced off its rump in a prolonged arc, spewing its contents into the air.

I watched helplessly as the beleaguered whitetail once again charged my companion. Bill stood his ground, waving his arms in a desperate attempt to ward off another assault, but the frantic deer stormed onward. An enormous shroud of despair washed over me as I visualized Bill being trampled or knocked flat by the animal.

Just as the deer was upon him, it jumped more than six feet straight up, clearing Bill easily, and landed squarely on the floor behind him. Then it made another terrific leap, crashed through a window near the top of the garage door and landed outside the building. Again the animal vaulted forward, hurdling two cars parked bumper to bumper along the curb, and slammed headlong into the front fender of an oncoming motorist.

The struck whitetail slumped to the ground like a flattened prizefighter and for a moment seemed down for the count, but it suddenly sprang to its feet and bolted across the road, disappearing behind several buildings. Bill and I tried to follow the deer, but we soon lost track of it, finally concluding it must have run back to its home range.

We were both relieved the episode was over and departed better friends that day. As I drove home, I began thinking about all the things I could have done differently that might have improved the outcome. It didn't take long to realize that under the circumstances, Bill Wallace and I made out rather well.

I had allowed myself to overlook one cardinal rule: Whenever one deals with wildlife, anything can happen and usually does.

Harbingers of Spring

ON THE first mild day in March, the mountain pulsates with singing birds. Some are permanent residents; others spend only the warmer months here. Still others are either brief visitors or flyovers. But all of them are harbingers of spring.

Every year the order of appearance shifts a bit, although the cast of characters remains pretty much the same. Still, over the last 21 years, there have been some changes. Years ago, eastern bluebirds, for instance, were glimpsed and heard only briefly in early spring and late fall. Now they are common breeders and sometimes year-round residents on the mountain.

Bluebirds are the earliest of the nesting songbirds, so when they change their musical two-note calls to their “cheer, cheerful charmer” songs and begin fluttering in, out and around our bluebird box, I know spring is imminent.

Some robins, too, are year-round residents, and if the wild grape crop is abundant, flocks of several hundred winter in our south-facing hollows. Like the bluebirds, though, when their scolding “tut-tut-tuts” change to caroling songs and when they land by the dozens on our lawn and fields to scamper and probe for worms, I know winter is on the run.

The woodpecker family has also increased its numbers, species and year-round residencies here. Once we counted only pileated, hairy and downy woodpeckers as permanent residents, with rarely a com-

mon flicker wintering over. Now the numbers of all-season flickers are increasing, and relatively new arrivals from the South — the red-bellied woodpeckers — are even more common than flickers.

One mild winter I even found a yellow-bellied sapsucker on our grounds. All the woodpecker species celebrate spring by prolonged drumming, the equivalent to singing by the so-called passerine or songbirds such as northern cardinals, black-capped chickadees, tufted titmice and house finches, all of which tune their songpipes as soon as the days begin to lengthen and warm.

Then there are the flyovers. First to appear are honking skeins of Canada geese. For several days and nights they waver overhead in undulating Vs, penetrating the walls of our house with their “goose music,” as Aldo Leopold once called it. Their siren calls bring me outside in a rush to watch and revel in the warming winds pushing them northward.

Once the geese are gone, they are replaced by tundra swans, whose long-necked, white-bodied silhouettes — reminiscent of angels — shine against the deep blue skies. Formerly called whistling swans because of their high-pitched “wo-hoo” calls, they are often heard before they are seen streaming overhead in weaving lines and wedges.

One particularly memorable occasion occurred on a cool, breezy mid-March day when I heard the first tundra swans of the season. I had just started up our First Field Trail, and I raced back

By Marcia Bonta



The Naturalist's Eye

to the powerline right-of-way for an unimpeded view of more than a hundred passing immediately above me.

That was merely the prelude. Waves of swans, anywhere from five to 125 at a time, rolled over the mountain. American crows and northern cardinals, up until then the principal noisemakers of the month, were silenced by the swans, as if in tribute to their size, beauty and reverberating calls — like peasants in awe of royalty.

Clouds gathered, turning the sky gray, but still they came, even as snowflakes floated in the air. They flung out their wild cries in defiance of the wind and cold, proclaiming the advent of spring despite the wintry aspect. Finally the tundra swan extravaganza ended after more than 600 of the magnificent birds had flown over in less than half an hour.

The third flyovers are keening flocks of ring-billed gulls, heading for their breeding areas on the north shores of Lake Erie and Ontario. Usually the local newspapers report their appearance as an aberration — “seagulls” landing in local school yards or parking lots. But ring-billed gulls are smaller than the quintessential seagulls, herring gulls, and have a black ring encircling their bills.

They winter in places like the Washington, DC, Mall between the Capitol Building and the Washington Monument. They also frequent the seacoast, although they like plowed fields, lakes and bays as much as the sea.

Sometime in early March the red-winged blackbirds arrive, usually in flocks of 50 to 100, singing their “okalee” songs from the tops of our yard trees. Even though they are the most abundant bird species in North America, they are favorites of mine because they evoke visions of a misty swamp at dawn awakening to the creaking posturings of hundreds of blackbirds settling

their territories and beseeching the females to join them.

Once a pair bred in our field year after year, but now the redwings are just all brief visitors. To entice them back, our boys transplanted some cattails into our small wetland, but so far it hasn't worked.

On the other hand, their close relatives, the brown-headed cowbirds, spend the warmer season here. Universally disliked because they are nest parasites — they lay their eggs in the nests of other bird species — I maintain a soft spot for them because of their liquid song and their courtship antics.

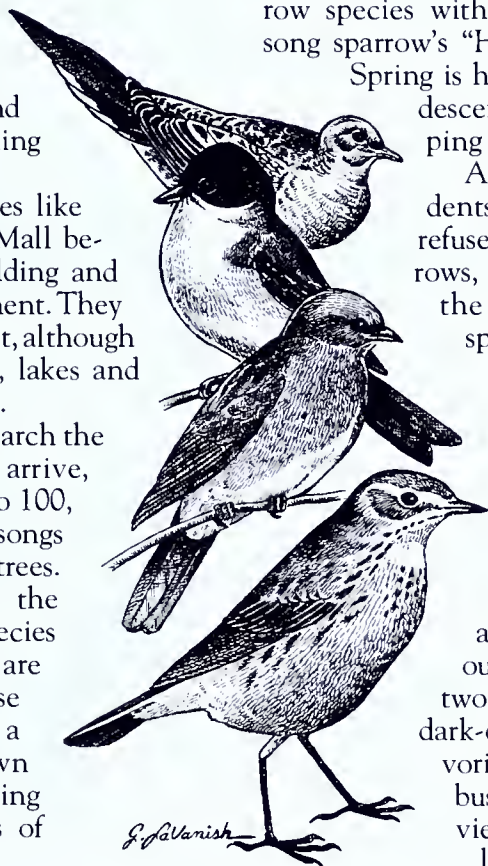
As the lineup of males sing, they try to impress the female beside them by fluffing up their feathers, arching their necks, spreading their tails and wings in unison and then falling forward in what researchers call their “topple-over” display, catching themselves just as they appear to be headed for the ground.

Then there are what my husband calls the “dicky” birds, also known as LBJs or “little brown jobs,” those look-alike sparrow species with distinctive songs: the song sparrow's “Hip! Hip! Hurrah boys!

Spring is here”; the field sparrow's descending trill; and the chipping sparrow's buzzing rattle.

All are warm-weather residents. Although my husband refuses to sort out the sparrows, even he can distinguish the larger, handsome fox sparrows, which usually stop for a short scratch beneath the bird feeder before heading farther north to their breeding grounds in Canada.

Last March, though, they were caught by spring snowstorms in our area, and we had three at our feeder for more than two weeks. They joined the dark-eyed juncos in their favorite 10-foot-high juniper bush during the night and vied with the feeder regulars during the day.



I never tired of watching those large, foxy-red birds vigorously scratching down through the foot of standing snow, kicking backward with both feet. Once they cleared an area, other ground feeders joined them in gleaning the fallen seed.

Of all the harbingers of spring, the eastern phoebes are my favorites. For years they have arrived during the third week in March, singing their raspy, repetitive "fee-bee" song. Last year, however, one arrived on March 7, more than a week earlier than any date in the last 21 years.

He sang during the next four days from the top of a cherry tree on the far side of the barn, stopping frequently to fly from his perch and snatch airborne insects — the phoebe's usual fare.

Then came howling winds and a fierce snowstorm. After the third freezing day in a row and no sign of warming, my husband said to me, "That phoebe is history." And, indeed, reports from nearby towns of dead robins, fox sparrows and phoebes were common. Newscasters even told residents what to feed the starving birds.

But our phoebe was made of sterner stuff. I found him in the woods, flying within a couple feet of the ground from snag to branch to stump to log, pausing on each perch to peer intently down at the snow or the cleared rings of open soil at the base of some trees.

Apparently, he knew enough to look for insects such as snow fleas that crawl and mate in the snow. I imagine he spent his nights in the barn because as soon as the weather warmed he was back on his old perch, singing and flicking his tail in characteristic phoebe fashion.

Finally, with all the ups and downs of the seasons, the perfect day arrives near the end of the month when I see the first hermit thrush skulking in the underbrush along Laurel Ridge Trail, slowly raising its bright orange tail up and down; when killdeer and common loons call as they fly overhead; and when an eastern meadowlark pauses to sing from the top of a weed head.

I scare up an American woodcock from a wet spot along the First Field Trail, and I hear, far below me in the hollow, the

haunting "Poor Sam Peabody, Peabody, Peabody" songs of the migrating white-throated sparrows.

Mourning doves, lit by sunlight that shows off their pearlescent beauty, coo their sad songs. The first male towhee calls his name. And, along the ridge, returning turkey vultures tilt from side to side while red-tailed hawks circle over the field screaming their downward "keers."

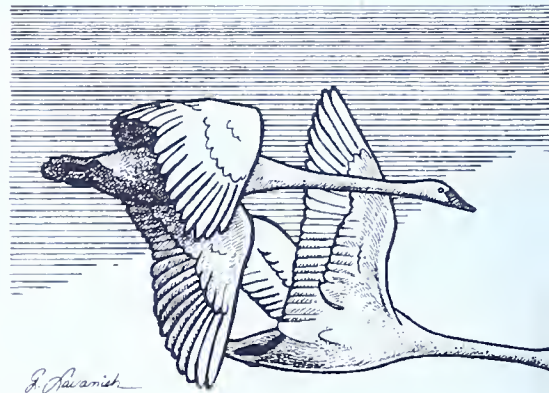
Those are all the expected harbingers of spring. But sometimes I have glimpses of unexpected ones, too. One year it was an afternoon visitation of American pipits on St. Patrick's Day.

Circumpolar birds of the tundra, they spend their winters in the warmer climes of southern Asia, Central America and northern Africa, although they sometimes winter as far north as northern Ohio and Massachusetts. They've even been known to stay in central Pennsylvania.

But the 15 American pipits that spent the afternoon on our meadow were probably migrants, enticed by the sight of our closely cut, hillside meadow so reminiscent, with its snowy patches, of the high tundra world they inhabit.

Watching them for most of the afternoon, running over our barren ground still patched with snow and swept by wind and cold, I felt as if I had been magically transported to the tundra for a few hours.

So as spring progresses it is the certainty of the season and its creatures that I look forward to. But it is also the uncertainties, such as those American pipits, that keep me eager and alert to the changing kaleidoscope of an Appalachian spring — the greatest natural show on earth.





On the lighter side, while visiting England, Schuyler drops by Sherwood Forest, the home of the legendary bowman . . .

Robin Hood

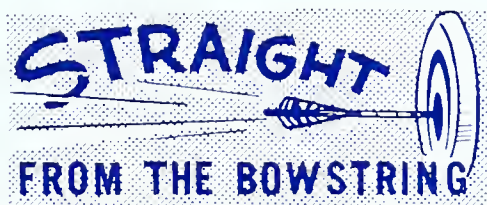
By Keith C. Schuyler

IF THERE BE ye who know not of Robyn Hode and his merry men of Sherwode Forest, yet thou prate of thine excellence at the butts with the bow, you just aren't with it. I have it on some authority that the archer better known as Robin Hood would have laughed at the best scores made today with even the finest of compound bows.

Perhaps those of us weaned on the longbow were best acquainted with the exploits of Robin. It was he (or those who have perpetuated his legend) who made famous the English arm of war and hunting. Historians have their Crecy and

Agincourt and other battles to prove the longbow's efficacy. But they lack the romance attached to it.

Hollywood has played around with Robin Hood; at least six movies have been



made, but like with any other film, you never can be sure of what you are viewing unless you have read the book.

I have long desired to walk the paths trod by Robin and his greenwood companions. For how else can a person separate fact from fiction unless he's present to seek his ghost or, mayhap, hear his hunting horn or a sweet ballad by Allen a Dale.

Air Force Reunion

A visit to Robin's stomping grounds was made possible last October when another nostalgic trip found me on the English shores. My wife and I attended a reunion of the 44th Bomb Group of the Eighth Air Force —with whom I flew in World War II — at Shipdham, near Norwich. Once there, the missus and I allowed ourselves three extra days to find Robin Hood.

Although we passed through London twice because of our air schedule, the thought of touring the city held no attraction for me. Besides, I planned on getting home for hunting camp in Sullivan County on Oct. 10.

After an excellent reunion, Eloise and I headed by train for Nottingham, the city most often associated with the exploits of Robin Hood. It sits in the county of Nottinghamshire, roughly in the geographical center of England.

I arrived with some misgivings. During the reunion, my contacts with the English folks, use of the telephone and one trip to Norwich's most prominent sporting goods store yielded little about archery — although it seemed fairly well supplied with guns and fishing tackle. Further, I had been told that there was not much to aid my research at Nottingham — originally named Snottingham after the Dane Snot. However, I was informed, there is an elaborate tourist trap there that depicts much of what is known about Robin Hood.

By chance, in conversation with a young man on the train, I discovered that the Visitors Centre and

County Park was located near the town of Worksop. Further, the man had been instructed in archery by a Professor Martin J. Wells at Welbeck College, a preparatory school for the military.

We traveled an extra 19 miles by rail, and by taxi we located the professor, who took us to the Centre. It was a hurried trip because the prof was babysitting their young daughter and had to get his car back in time to meet his wife.

A typical English overcast sky threatened rain as we quickly walked to the Major Oak, which sits in the center of the 185-hectare (60-acre) park. This is Sherwood Forest today. It is but a remnant of the scattered fields and woodlands that once comprised more than 100,000 acres stretching from Nottingham for some 20 miles to the north.

Although the well-worn dirt path we followed would have offered little concealment for Robin's men, it leads through some of the forest's remaining heavy timber. Giant oaks are interspersed with white birch, affectionately known as "Ladies of the Wood." Some of the latter are more than 200 years old, yet they are youngsters



beside the ancient scraggly oaks towering over them.

It wasn't long before we came to the Major Oak. Although but 70 feet in height, the massive, hollow trunk measures 36 feet in circumference; 12 people could stand within it. Believed to be more than 600 years old, the tree is carefully tended to. A railing keeps visitors away to protect the ground around it. When in foliage, the tree needs 1,000 liters of water a day. Lower limbs are supported by massive wooden props to resist high winds and the weight of new growth.

Unfortunately, although linked with the legend of Robin Hood and his Merry Men, this trysting tree is in itself a crack in the story. Reputedly, it was here that the outlaws of Sherwood Forest ate the king's deer and planned new ventures. Since historians generally agree, however, that Robin was born around the year 1150, even at 600 years of age the Major Oak would have at best been nothing more than a well-preserved acorn when the outlaw roamed Sherwood Forest. Most legends waver a bit, of course, and this one is no different. In Robin Hood's time there were few who could read or write, and much of the information was passed down in old English ballads.

Scholars believe Robin's true name — if he lived at all — was Robert Fitz-Ooth, Earl of Huntingdon. They are divided between whether he was a Norman noble or a Saxon. If the former, he was at the top of the social ladder; if a Saxon, he was at the bottom. While some ballads about this outlaw were written and sung long after his time, a few versions remain enticingly near to the time of Robin Hood. New evidence indicates that tales of his activities were already popular by 1261.

Despite the conflict of dates, the Major Oak, left, is considered the spot where Robin and his outlaws ate the king's deer and planned to rob the rich to help the poor. Life-size figures, right, portray Robin's first meeting with John Little, the giant of a man who became "Little John," Robin's friend and second in command.

His story is perhaps best told in the book *The Merry Adventures of Robin Hood* by Howard Pyle, published in 1883 and republished in 1968 by Classic Press, Inc.

I have no intention of retelling the story of Robin Hood here. But "facts" of his life give us an insight into those times — and especially the yew longbow. It is believed that this efficient arm of the hunter and the soldier came into being well over 900 years ago.

At that time all deer and other wild game were considered the property of the king. Peasants were not allowed to even cut wood to burn against England's frequently wet and nearly always damp climate. The penalty for shooting a deer ranged from having one's ears cut off to being hung.

Winter Supplement

Despite those drastic deterrents, many people supplemented their usual winter meals of salt beef and pork with fresh venison. Their target was the red deer, a larger animal than our whitetail but smaller than our elk. The red deer stands about five feet high at the shoulder, and to the impoverished peasant or yeoman it represented a substantial return for the risk of apprehension.

It was such a deer that caused Robin Hood to become an outlaw. As the legend goes, he was en route to Nottingham to vie in an archery match for a butt (126 gallons) of ale when he came upon 15 foresters. These protectors of the king's deer



chided him about his youth. To prove his ability, he bet he could hit a mark at three score rods (330 yards). His bet was taken as he sighted a herd of deer beyond that distance and offered to "cause the best of them to die."

His arrow went true, but the forester who wagered reneged on the bet. Further, half drunk, he sent an arrow after the departing youth that narrowly missed his head. Already upset, Robin returned an arrow that dispatched his attacker. Now doubly accused, the young man fled to the forest he went on to make famous.

Not too Familiar

Obviously the author of this tale was not very familiar with the bow and arrow. Even if Robin's arrow flew true, that the deer would have dropped at the shot is highly unlikely. But I finished reading the book anyway.

With a price of 200 pounds on his head, Robin collected 100 yeomen in similar circumstances and after a year he met up with John Little. Seven feet tall, he won an exchange with oaken staves and dumped Robin from a foot bridge into a stream.

Acceptance of an invitation to join the outlaw band became conditioned upon

Robin's ability to best him with the bow. To prove his ability, Little hit a bit of bark four-fingers wide at 80 yards. Robin's arrow split Little's shaft.

It was this happening from which has been borrowed today the term, a "Robin Hood," when one archer splits his own shaft or that of another. Such occurrences are not uncommon in modern archery, but I know of none deliberately made at 80 yards.

John Little joined the group, but not before he had been duly christened Little John with a measure of ale. He became second in command.

Much is made of the cloth yard shaft when describing arrows of Robin's time. The standard was fixed by King Edward VI in the 1550s at 37 inches and was taken from a yard of cloth before the latter was officially shortened to 36 inches in more modern times.

Goose feathers were usually used for fletching, probably because they were easiest to come by. For royalty, peacock feathers were sometimes employed. Much as today, three vanes were used.

Another incident among the Merry Men shames my scores and does make me wonder a bit. "Ten men shot three rounds of arrows each, and although the garland was but three palms breadth wide, and was full seven score (140) yards distant, only two arrows went without the ring."

With light dimming, Robin cut a hazel wand at fourscore (80) yards "little greater than a man's thumb distance. I'll be blamed if he didn't hit it on the first shot!"

Arrows must have been easy to come by in those days. There is no mention of other than broadhead points; nor is their mention of how they were recovered from trees where they had been shot in practice.

In one casual tournament, a garland was set up in front of an oak tree at 6-score paces. In the old Roman measurement of 58.1 inches to a pace, this comes out to 581



SALESWOMAN at Marksman Bows Limited draws one of the fine longbows patterned after those that were the mainstay of the archers — whoever they were — at nearby Sherwood Forest many years ago.

feet; even today, with a measured military pace of 30 inches, that's 300 feet. Those who missed were given a clout along side the head hard enough to drop them. In the only mention of him missing, Robin, who blamed a bad feather on his shaft, received his punishment from none other than King Richard.

It should be mentioned that members of Robin's band, in addition to their longbows, often wore swords. So it was, after showing up bounty hunter Guy Gisbourne with the bow, that Robin dispatched him with the sword. It was only the second life he took until he went into the service of Richard I the Lion Heart, who served 1189-99.

Robin's end came at the hands of a female cousin. She deliberately bled him to near death for a fever in a fake administration of her skill as a leech, the name given to doctors in the Middle Ages. Blood letting was then, and much later, an accepted method of curing various ills.

With failing strength and the assistance of Little John, Robin sent an arrow out the window with a request that he be

buried where it struck. And he fell back dead.

My desire to see something of English archery was rewarded after our visit to Sherwood Forest. I was directed to the archery manufacturing firm of Lew Howis at Marksman, Makers of Fine Archery Equipment, at Tan Gallop, Welbeck, Worksop. Shortage of time precluded a full tour of the factory, but a conversation with management provided an insight into the type and excellence of equipment. Sales extend to many countries other than England.

Compound bows are less than popular. Many English archers refuse to shoot on a line with compound shooters.

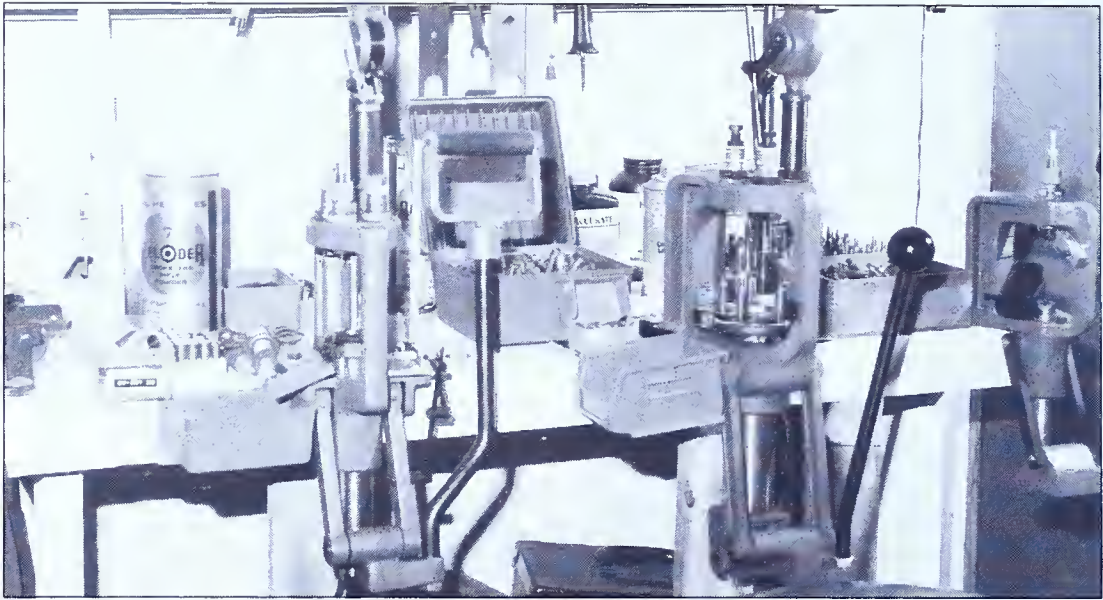
If you have trouble with some of the dates and times in this somewhat askance look at the life and doings of Robin Hood, please accept the possible. For the legend of Robin Hood will continue long beyond either you or me.

As a commentary so states on the *The Merry Adventures of Robin Hood*, "They might not have actually existed — but they certainly should have."

Books in Brief...

(Order from publisher, not from Game Commission)

The Allegheny River: Watershed of the Nation, by Jim Schafer and Mike Sajna, Penn State Press, Suite C, Barbara Building, 820 North University Dr., Penn State University, University Park, PA 16802, 305 pp., \$45. Trace the history of the Allegheny, particularly the key role it played in the settlement of America, through the writing of Mike Sajna — a frequent *Game News* contributor — and stunning photography by Jim Schafer. Beginning at the Point in Pittsburgh and, historically, from Indian life along the river before the white man's arrival, the writer and photographer journey up the river and through time, ultimately ending up at the headwaters of the Allegheny — the Triple Divide or "Watershed of the Nation." Read about Chief Cornplanter, Johnny Appleseed, Philip Tome, John Wilkes Booth and many other famous and infamous people who influenced the area's rich history. Follow the history of transportation through the eyes of an old river boat captain to the controversial damming of the river for flood control purposes. Relive the industrial age of steel, the birth of the Heinz Company, oil boom days, and other industries. Follow the birth, growth and, at times, demise of river towns all along the Allegheny's course. "The history of the United States can be literally told through the story of the Allegheny River," Sajna writes. "Indians, Frontiersmen, Colonists, Washington. Iron Ore. Steel. Glass. Aluminum. Railroads. Munitions for war. Destruction of the environment. Inventors. Idealists. Scoundrels. Rich. Poor. Keelboats. Steamboats. Immigrants. Sportsmen. Assassins. Everything good and bad about the country can be found along the Allegheny." Right he is, and this book covers it all very well.



RELOADING NEED not be an elaborate affair, although there's virtually no limit to the level to which a person may aspire. Of all the advantages the hobby offers, being able to develop custom loads for any particular firearm and to do more shooting without added costs are probably the most appealing.

Reloading for Beginners

By Don Lewis

Photos by Helen Lewis

"I WOULD LIKE to buy my husband some reloading equipment," the caller asked. "What should I be looking for? He's been wanting to take up the hobby for years, but he's afraid it might be too complicated."

"I suggest you look at the several reloading kits available," I explained. "Each contains all the basic equipment needed to get a budding reloader started off in the right direction."

As far as being complicated, it's not

unusual for even experienced shooters and hunters to think handloading is complex and even somewhat dangerous. And while there is some truth to those concerns, by following directions and strictly adhering to data published in current reloading manuals, there's no reason why anybody would not find reloading to be a safe and enjoyable hobby. In essence, reloading a metallic cartridge is nothing more than replacing the three components — primer, powder and bullet.

For all types of hunting purposes, loads published in current reloading manuals are sufficient. Some handloaders don't believe that, but it's true. I get inquiries asking for my special loads for everything from the .222 Rem. to the .35 Whelen. When I reply that I use only published loads, some folks think I'm joking. The



FOR STARTING out, a basic kit that includes a press a scale, the fundamental tools and a good loading manual is all a person needs to get started in this fascinating and enjoyable hobby.

simple fact is, my loading data comes straight from current reloading manuals such as Speer, Hornady, Lyman and Sierra. After all the range tests I've conducted over the years, I have no doubts that suggested load combinations have all the speed, power and accuracy for big game hunting.

When it comes to developing loads for a varmint rig, I'm more inclined to experiment because a varmint rifle is generally capable of tighter groups. But even though I often slightly vary powder charges to see if tighter groups result, I never exceed max loads. In fact, speaking of max loads, it's generally recognized that the most accurate load is often a grain or so less than the max charge.

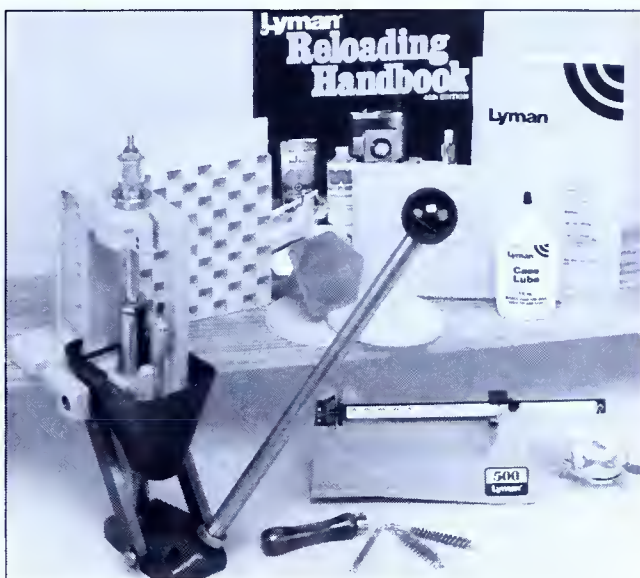
Early handloaders strived for maximum velocity, and I was no exception — at first. But once I started shooting from a benchrest, I soon learned that sheer speed doesn't guarantee accuracy.

Many evenings I sat at the bench trying to figure out why my super speed loads weren't producing tight groups. Then I stumbled upon the analogy of a baseball pitcher who could burn the hide off a baseball but had no idea where it was going. When he calmed down, though, or perhaps tired, he achieved good control.

After thinking about this, I decided to cut back on the loads I was using. The results were instant and quite gratifying. Loading solely for velocity was the wrong approach, I learned, and I still believe it.

So if a quest for velocity isn't a reason to handload, what is? There's no question in my mind that the prime benefit gained from handloading is more shooting.

In my younger days, sighting in a big game rifle meant taking a couple of shots at a 2-gallon oil can about 40 yards away. Furthermore, I adjusted the sights only if I



completely missed the can. In a typical year, I probably fired less than 10 rounds. I wasn't alone. Some hunters claimed a box of 20 rounds lasted three or four years. That only proved they didn't practice.

True, years ago, many shooters couldn't afford to waste ammo. Firing a box for practice had little appeal. Well, shells are still expensive today but, generally speaking, a handloader can produce three rounds for the price of one factory round, without sacrificing quality.

What that means in most circumstances, though, is not that a person can expect to cut his shooting expenses by two-thirds, but that he can do three times as much shooting without the added expense. Dedicated handloaders don't stash their big game rifles for an 11-month siesta following the deer seasons; they may warm their barrels a dozen or more times a year.

Starter Kit

When it comes to taking up the hobby, let's take a look at a Lyman starter kit as an example. It consists of the Orange Crusher reloading press, which has a 4 1/2-inch opening and a compound leverage system that will handle virtually every handgun and rifle cartridge — including the largest magnums. This massive "O" frame press takes all standard 7/8 x 14 dies, shell holders and accessories.

The kit includes Lyman's most popular

reloading scale, the Model 500, which has a 505-grain capacity and 1/10th-grain accuracy. It fulfills almost every reloading need and assures that each charge is right. Along with the press and scale, the kit includes a case lube kit, powder funnel, primer tray and the *46th Edition Reloading Handbook*. The kit lists for \$189.95.

Top Priority

I won't explain the entire reloading process because most manuals cover it thoroughly. I do want to stress the importance of preparing brass cases, though. Cases do not last indefinitely, and there is no way to determine how long one will last. Therefore, case preparation is a top priority: Proper inspection and preparation is important, especially with cases that have been fired several times.

Whenever possible, novice handloaders should use once-fired brass because it is most likely to be free from defects. Still, each case should be wiped with a clean cloth and inspected for body and neck

cracks. Also, check carefully for incipient case separation — a bright ring partially or completely around the case head. Discard cases that show any signs of gas leakage around the primer.

In essence, don't hesitate to destroy any case that looks at all suspicious. Whenever I encounter a defective or suspicious case, I crimp shut the mouth with a pair of pliers to avoid accidental use.

After wiping the outside of each case and inspecting it for cracks, brush the inside of the neck with a brush of appropriate caliber to loosen and remove fouling. Then gently tap the mouth of the case several times on a wooden block to knock out the loose residue.

This simple step is overlooked by many handloaders, but it can eliminate a lot of potential problems. Cleaning the case neck in this manner will help ease the passage of the expanding button when resizing, and may even enhance accuracy by helping to maintain a uniform bullet pull.

For cleaning necks, I installed a friction-type chuck on the shaft of a small electric motor. The chuck holds a 25 or 30 caliber barrel swab that has been lightly lubricated with gun grease. Pushing the case neck over the spinning swab finishes cleaning the neck and, at the same time, applies a smear of lube on the inside neck wall. There's no screeching when pulling the expander plug up through the neck. This step is a must for metallic progressive reloading presses.

Putting lube on the outside of cases to be full length resized can be done a dozen ways. For years, I used a small board with a wool cloth stretched over it. I rolled the cases over the prelubed cloth.

More recently, I've given up all that work and mess in exchange for a set of RCBS lubricating/decapping dies. With the proper die in the press, decapping and lubricating the outside merely requires a down and up stroke of the press handle. If priming is done at the same station, however, the decapping pin has to be removed from the full length resizing die to prevent pushing out the new primer.

Cases stretch when fired. Resizing brings the case back to normal diameter but also

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tends to lengthen the case neck. A case that's too long can, upon being fired, increase chamber pressure to a dangerous level. Therefore, each resized case should be measured.

I normally trim the entire lot of cases back to the trim length listed in the reloading manual. Some people use a file, but I've found it is much easier to do with a regular case trimmer. After sizing and trimming, check the case length again.

For the beginner, choosing a starting load combination may seem confusing. The best advice, after selecting a powder type and bullet from a current manual, is to start with the lowest suggested powder charge. For instance Lyman's new *47th Reloading Handbook* makes specific propellant recommendations likely to produce top accuracy — which is what every handloader should be striving for.

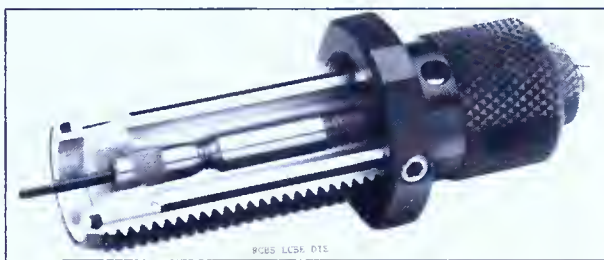
Lyman points out that first efforts should always begin with a load listed in the "Suggested Starting Grains" column of the manual. Be absolutely certain to use the exact components shown in the data: Do not switch bullet weights or powder types or charges.

Primer selection is not difficult. Just use the correct diameter. Most reloading manuals show the correct primer size. Stay away from magnum primers unless the data specifically calls for them. Using a magnum primer in a non-magnum case can alter the ballistics and safety of the load.

Handloading is for anyone willing to use care and a manual. Always start with the lowest suggested load and gradually work up. Then, once an optimum load has



A LUBE PAD, above, has long been used for lubricating cases before running them through the resizing die. A decapping/lubricating die, below, will do the same thing, but if priming is done at the same station, the decapping rod must be removed from the die.



been found, be repetitious. Do the 40th round exactly the same as the first.

Last, check your loads on the range under controlled conditions. Shoot a primer, powder, bullet combination until you know exactly how it performs at many distances. Testing is not a one-session affair. It takes time, but it's the only way to learn exactly how the load and your firearm are working.

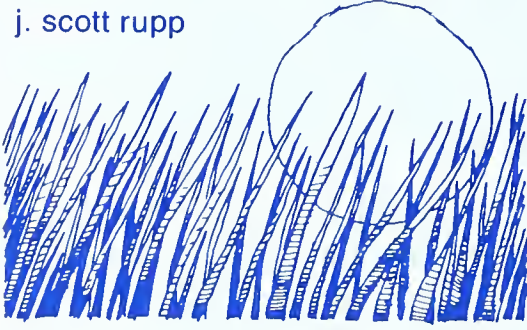
Connecting consistently on woodchucks at long ranges or making a precise shot on a buck with your own fodder is the handloader's ultimate payoff. Take up handloading, and I know you'll find that to be the truth.

Commission 800 Numbers

Within Pennsylvania, use the agency's toll-free 800 numbers to contact a wildlife conservation officer. For the Northwest Region, call (800) 533-6764; Southwest, (800) 243-8519; Northcentral, (800) 422-7551; Southcentral, (800) 422-7554; Northeast, (800) 228-0789; and Southeast (800) 228-0791. Phones will be manned around the clock during the major hunting seasons, and about 15 hours a day at other times.

In the wind

j. scott rupp



Russia has seen a five-fold increase in poaching since the country opened its borders to outside trade. Amur tigers, in particular, are valued for their skins; a single tiger can bring as much as \$10,000 — more than 20 times the average Russian's salary, according to media reports. Fifty years of preservation that rescued the Amur tiger from extinction may be for naught. Biologists believe up to 50 of the endangered tigers are being poached each year, impacting heavily on a population estimated at only 350 animals.

The illegal dumping of hundreds of dead chickens has led to an outbreak of botulism among birds of prey in Arkansas. Up to 30 hawk carcasses were found in the area around the dump; they contracted the disease by eating the flesh of the dead chickens.

Michigan wildlife officials and sportsmen are set to take up a debate concerning the practice of baiting, which is legal in that state. According to the *North Woods Call*, many hunters have for years been asking for a ban on baiting — at least on public lands. But many people also think it may be too late to stop baiting because it has become a profitable business. It's estimated as many as 25 million bushels of bait (carrots, beets, apples and so forth) were used by deer hunters last year, which roughly equates to \$75 million for vegetable growers and retailers.

The animal rights group Fund for Animals has asked the Colorado Wildlife Commission to ban bowhunting for bears, according to *Gun Week*. The paper quoted a Fund for Animals official as saying: "Our objective is to eliminate sport hunting. We try to take on those hunts and methods that are the most objectionable. As we whittle it down, we convert non-hunters to anti-hunters." In a public referendum last November, Colorado voters passed a ban on spring bear hunts and on using dogs or bait for fall hunts.

The closing of Pease Air Force Base in New Hampshire produced the Great Bay National Wildlife Refuge last year. It is the state's first coastal refuge and also its largest. The area is important habitat to a number of species: it is New Hampshire's major wintering habitat for the black duck.

A Cody, WY, man paid dearly for illegally taking a trophy bull elk. Shortly after investigators found a headless elk carcass, stories appeared in two publications hailing a record-book elk taken in the Squaw Creek area. But the topography didn't match the area shown in the photos, and following an investigation wildlife officials arrested the man on a number of charges. His sentence included \$3,754 in fines, a 45-day jail sentence, 18 months probation, and a nine-year revocation of his hunting privileges.

A survey of Montanans conducted by the U.S. Forest Service found that two out of three residents oppose logging in national forest roadless areas. The survey, reported in Inner Voice, also noted that Montanans believe the Forest Service should be more concerned with wildlife and that 70 percent of them are opposed to opening more forest areas to motorized recreation.

Answers: Nos. 3, 4 and 7 are false.



mammals of the mountain
(from Set No. 2)

Bird & Mammal Charts

The Game Commission's ever popular bird and mammal charts are perfect for homes, classrooms, camps — just about anywhere. Created by internationally renown wildlife artist Ned Smith, these charts feature the state's most common mammal and bird species — 179 in all.

Charts are grouped into sets; Sets No. 1 and No. 2 each contain four 20"x30" charts and are particularly useful for classrooms.

Set No. 1 features winter birds, marsh and water birds, waterfowl, and birds of prey. **PRICE: \$6**

Set No. 2 depicts mammals of farm and woodlot, mammals of the mountain, birds of the forest, and birds of field and garden. **PRICE: \$6**

Set No. 3 includes all eight charts, each 11"x14" in size. **PRICE: \$5**

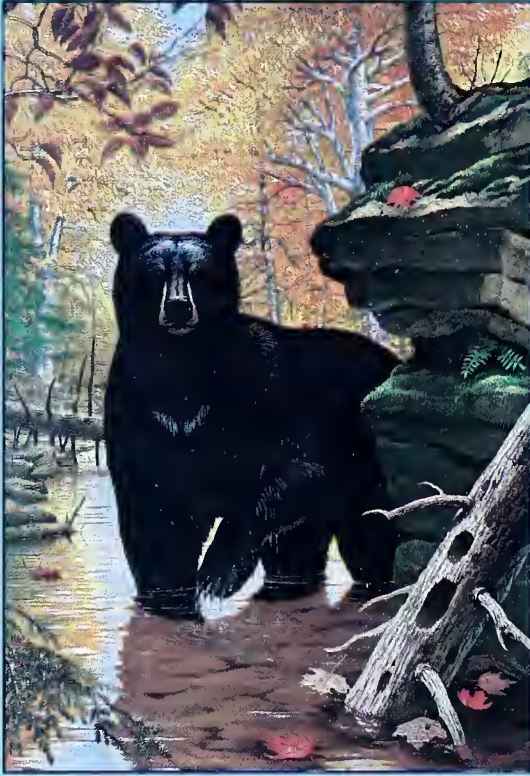
The charts are sold only in sets, not individually. Prices include sales tax and delivery.



birds of prey
(from Set No. 1)

Send check or money order (no cash, please) payable to Pennsylvania Game Commission, Dept. MS, 2001 Elmerton Ave., Harrisburg, PA 17110-9797. Be sure to ask for a complete list of the agency's sale items and free publications.

Working Together for Wildlife



- ◆ “Bear Run” by Bob Sopchick is the 11th limited edition fine art print for the Working Together for Wildlife program.

As with previous editions, “Bear Run” is limited to 600 signed and numbered prints on acid-free, 100 percent rag paper. Image size is about 15x22½ inches. The prints are \$125, delivered; framed prints cost \$97.50 more.

- ◆ Proceeds from WTFW sales benefit Pennsylvania’s nongame management and research projects. So far, the program has raised more than \$1 million and has helped bring eagles, ospreys, otters and other species back to our landscape.
 - ◆ Limited numbers of past prints are still available: kestrel ('86), elk ('87), egret ('88), white-tailed deer ('89), bald eagle ('90), red fox ('91) and ruffed grouse ('92).
- ◆ Don't forget to order a 1993 WTFW patch for only \$3. Last year's ruffed grouse patch sold out, so don't wait too long. Some patches from past years are still available, though. Ask for a complete list of sale items when placing your order.
- ◆ Order from the Pennsylvania Game Commission,
Dept. MS, 2001 Elmerton Ave., Harrisburg, PA 17110-9797.



PENNSYLVANIA GAME NEWS

APRIL 1993

ONE DOLLAR





Outdoor Recreation Maps

To help outdoorsmen discover more of what Pennsylvania has to offer, the Game Commission has produced six "Outdoor Recreation Maps." Each multi-color 24 x 36-inch map covers one of the Commission's field regions. Highlighted are Game Lands, State Forests and Parks, and private lands enrolled in the Commission's public access programs. Also depicted are municipalities, roads, waterways, and — giving the map a three-dimensional appearance — 100-foot contour lines. Maps are printed on Tyvek, a tear-resistant, water-repellent material which will withstand years of hard use. Each regional map costs \$4 delivered, and can be ordered from the Pennsylvania Game Commission, Dept. AR, 2001 Elmerton Avenue, Harrisburg, PA 17110-9797. If you are not sure of which maps you want, write for a PGC map order form.

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PENNSYLVANIA GAME NEWS (ISSN 0031-451X) is published monthly for \$9 per year, \$25.50 for three years, or membership in Pennsylvania's Cooperative Farm-Game Project or Safety Zone Project; to Canada and all other foreign countries, \$10 U.S. currency, per year. Published by the Pennsylvania Game Commission, Harrisburg, PA. Phone (717) 787-4250. Second-class postage paid at Harrisburg, Pa. CHANGE OF ADDRESS: POSTMASTER: Send both old and new addresses to Pennsylvania Game News, 2001 Elmerton Ave., Harrisburg, PA 17110-9797. Allow six weeks for processing. Material accepted is subject to our requirements for editing and revising. Author payment covers all rights and title to accepted material, including manuscripts, photographs, drawings and illustrations. No information contained in this magazine may be used for advertising or commercial purposes. Opinions expressed here do not necessarily reflect those of the Pennsylvania Game Commission. Copyright © 1993 by the Pennsylvania Game Commission, an Equal Opportunity Employer, the programs of which are all administered consistent with the goals and objectives of Affirmative Action. All rights reserved.

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Be Seen and Safe

THIS SPRING, as surely every sportsman must know by now, turkey hunters must wear at least 100 square inches of fluorescent orange while moving. Although not required, it's strongly recommended that hunters wear or display orange while calling, too. Fluorescent orange safety alert bands specifically for turkey hunting are available from the Game Commission.

This new safety regulation and the accompanying fluorescent orange requirements that took effect last fall were implemented primarily to make turkey hunting more safe. And as last fall's hunting accident results clearly indicate, they are working well.

As covered in "Conservation News," beginning on page 38, the 1992 fall turkey season was the safest on record. There were only six turkey hunting accidents last fall, compared to the nearly 40 that had occurred in each of the previous two seasons, and there were no fatalities. Furthermore, only two of the six were cases of the victim being mistaken for game, while in the previous two seasons, that was the reason for a vast majority (77 percent) of the fall turkey hunting accidents.

Such a dramatic drop in the hunting accident rate clearly demonstrates the wisdom of the fluorescent orange requirements, and there's every reason to expect similar improvements this spring. Nonetheless, while wearing an orange hat, vest or sash will satisfy the legal requirements, spring gobbler hunters should certainly continue to practice safe hunting habits.

First, hunt defensively: Don't become an accident victim. Do not wear clothing with any sort of white, red or blue on it. When setting up to call, select a site that lets you see what's going on around you and then position yourself with a large tree, rock or other obstacle at your back so you cannot be mistaken for a turkey by anybody approaching undetected from behind. Once in position, assume every sound you hear is another person.

Practice good common sense. Never stalk a turkey: The practice is illegal, and the likelihood of sneaking up on a turkey is greatly outweighed by your chances of being involved in an accident. Always be on the lookout for other hunters. To attract the attention of another hunter — even a partner — do not wave, stand up or make turkey sounds. Instead, shout "Stop!" Be particularly careful when using a gobbler call.

Finally, and most importantly, when it comes time to shoot, positively identify your target; never shoot at sounds or movement. Considering that only bearded turkeys are legal game in the spring season, it's always difficult to imagine how camouflaged hunters can be mistaken for a legal gobbler, but it has happened all too frequently.

Hunting accidents dropped dramatically last year, particularly those involving people being shot in mistake for game. The new safety regulations that led to that reduction were made only after careful study and long debates. Although the new regulations are still contested in some circles, the early results clearly show that the best course of action was taken. The turkey woods are safer than they've ever been before, and considering past accident records, that has to be an outstanding achievement in anyone's book. — *Bob Mitchell*

Tom for a 12-Year-Old

By Richard Tate

THE 1991-92 Pennsylvania hunting seasons were among the most special of my hunting career — and I didn't shoot a thing. Nonetheless, my family enjoyed wild turkey at Thanksgiving and venison throughout the spring, and, no, I wasn't scavenging roadkills.

That year brought me a new hunting partner, my 12-year-old son, Bobby. Bobby would have joined the hunting fraternity at an earlier age if the law allowed. He enjoys hunting and fishing above all other sports, which certainly pleases me. And when he tagged a young turkey in the fall and a spike in deer season, I figured he had had about as much luck as any young hunter had a right to expect. That was good, too, because filling his spring gobbler tag didn't look too likely.

As a teacher with a fair commute to

work, I'm unable to hunt during the week, and it seems a third of the nation's turkey hunters are afield in Penn's Woods during spring weekends. Despite the odds, Bobby was extremely confident: He seemed to think tagging a tom would be a cinch. I knew otherwise.

My dad and I did a lot of preseason scouting, locating several birds we thought would be relatively unmolested by other hunters. The week prior to the opener, Dad, Bobby and I located a pair of toms that gobbled each evening prior to settling down for the night. They did this up to and including the night before opening day. The two birds seemed to roost separately: one above a field, the other below it.

Finding such promising turkey activity on land open to public hunting has become pretty rare in our bailiwick, so we



DAD AND I did a lot of preseason scouting, and we found several birds that weren't very accessible to other hunters. The week before the season opener, Dad, Bobby and I located a pair of gobblers that were well back in.

were excited. Dad thought this pair offered the best chance of getting one in front of Bobby's 20-gauge. The birds were a good mile from a hard road, in an area often overlooked by other hunters.

"It's certainly a safe place to hunt," Dad told me the night before the opener. "You and Bobby shouldn't have to worry much about other hunters. Most guys won't walk that far. It's probably a 2-mile hike over the woods trails."

I agreed, though I was disappointed that Dad was going to hunt elsewhere. "Three's a crowd," he insisted.

When Bobby and I rose at four o'clock, the wind was blowing fairly hard. I didn't think much about it at the time, and if I had, I'd have hunted the leeward side of a ridge instead. Luckily I didn't.

Our predawn hike in 60-degree weather had us both steamed up when we arrived at a spot I thought would be between the pair of gobblers. When the blackness began to be swept away, however, there was no gobbling.

Six o'clock passed and then 6:15. No gobbling. The wind picked up so hard we would have had to have been right on top of a bird to have heard him. I decided we'd better walk and call.

We slowly covered a mile or more of the mountain. I called every 100 to 200 yards, placing Bobby with his back against a large tree at each location. By eight o'clock I was discouraged, and even my optimistic 12-year-old was about ready to hang it up.

"It's just too darned windy," I told him as we stood on a steep bank above an old mountain field. Then I let out what I figured would be my final series of yelps.

"You got an answer, Dad. Over that way," Bobby whispered excitedly.

"Are you sure? I didn't hear anything."

"You bet. Call again."

Most of the morning I had been too lazy to use a diaphragm call, opting for a little chatterbox instead. I ripped off another series of yelps, and this time I could hear the gobbling, too.

WE DECIDED to walk and call every 100 to 200 yards. Each time we set up I placed Bobby against a large tree.

"C'mon, Bob. Let's get closer. He's not too far away, but we'll have to get past that thicket ahead of us to have a chance to work him in."

We quietly hustled 50 or 60 yards and set up against a large tree. We replaced our orange hats with camo caps, donned face masks, and I prepared to call. I started with the chatterbox but had a box caller and a diaphragm call ready as backups. Within five minutes, the gobbler was answering directly below us.

If he ascended a little bank he would appear over a rise only 20 yards away. I coaxed him with the chatterbox. No luck. I tried the diaphragm. Again, no luck. Even the box caller didn't work.

I finally handed Bobby the chatterbox. "Here, you try this," I whispered. "I'll call with the box at the same time." I wanted the gobbler to think there were a couple hens in his domain.

This strategy, often recommended by expert turkey hunters, didn't work either. Over the next 20 minutes the gobbler slowly walked away from us, calling less frequently.

"Come on, Bob," I said. "We'll move up to that split tree at the edge of that bank. Maybe we can get him to come back."

We hustled forward another 50 yards or so, set up and called from the edge of the bank. Though the tom continued to answer us, he would not return. Finally, after



half an hour, I figured it was time for another move.

This time we set up behind a downed tree, again about 50 yards closer to the bird, and I began with the box caller. The gobbler answered, more eagerly this time, I thought. I caught a glimpse of his bobbing head about 75 yards away.

At his reply, I surveyed the scene: It was not a favorable location. Many dead oaks littered the ground, a result of the gypsy moths' onslaught. Besides the many fallen trees, several thick clumps of striped maples dotted the area between us and the gobbler. If the tom came our way, Bobby would have a hard time getting a good shot. If I hadn't seen the gobbler, I would have probably repositioned us. But now I was afraid he would see us if we moved.

At my next call the bird gobbled and started to come our way. He vanished, however, behind a maze of deadfalls. I waited a couple minutes then yelped again.

When he answered, I knew he was right below us, but neither Bobby nor I could see him. I was debating whether or not to call again when the gobbler, a young tom in full strut, appeared from behind a maze of maples less than 30 yards away.

"There he is, Bob," I whispered.

"I can't see him," Bobby hissed. "Where is he?"

"To your left. Keep still. He'll see you if you move."

Gradually the tom came our way, finally dropping his strut, his head glowing like a true patriot. I knew Bobby saw him when he tensed slightly and eased the safety off his shotgun.

The tom kept coming and finally stopped about 15 yards away, head up. I hissed for Bobby to shoot. His 20-gauge barked immediately, and the turkey was down.

As fast as a 42-year-old can hurdle downed logs and break through brush, I got to the tom to prevent any miraculous escape. As I closed in on the downed bird, I saw another turkey become airborne: Bobby's tom had had a buddy, one that hadn't called.

Bobby's gobbler flopped a couple of times and then lay still. Not until the bird quit flopping did Bobby let out a whoop —

he can control his excitement better than I can.

As we tagged the bird, Bobby admired its 4-inch beard. "Look how his feathers shine, Dad. He sure is pretty."

I agreed, proud that my son could appreciate how beautiful wild turkeys really are. As we toted the tom from the forest, Bobby told me how he viewed the last few moments of the hunt.

"I couldn't see him till he hopped over a log, but I did see the other one after you saw this one. All I could see were his back and tail. It wasn't fanned out at all. When I saw the one I shot, he was really close and really looked big, all puffed up."

"Did you hear me whisper for you to shoot?"

"Yes. The place where I shot him was about the only place I could get a shot. There were so many little trees and deadfalls I waited until he was in the only opening where I could take a shot. I remembered what you told me, too."

"And what was that?" I asked curiously.

"To wait till he wasn't strutting. When he straightened up and stopped, I knew it was time to shoot. I aimed right at the base of his neck, too, just like you told me."

"You remembered all that?"

"Yeah. I wanted to make sure I got him."

"Were you nervous?"

"Not until I saw you hopping over all those logs. I had to put the gun back on safe real quick. Boy, you sure can jump for an old man," he teased.

He was right about the safety hint he gave me, though. I had acted excitedly and a little dangerously. Thankfully, Bobby has developed good safety habits — from much gun handling and from an excellent hunter education course — and was watching out for his "old man."

Bobby carried the gobbler most of the way back to our little truck. When we dressed the tom later, after showing him off to both of his grandfathers, it weighed 15 pounds.

Bobby and I are going to share a lot of memorable hunts as time goes by, I feel, but it's going to be difficult for any of them to top the hunt when Bobby collected his first spring gobbler.

Miniature Marvels

The tiny hummingbird, one of our most well-known neotropical visitors, will soon be arriving in Pennsylvania backyards.

By Connie Mertz

SPRING WAS BURSTING forth with its rainbow of colors. The red flowers of the rhododendrons were revealing themselves more and more each day. The columbines in the garden were hinting of the changing seasons as well. As the days got warmer, we keenly watched for our delightful backyard friends to arrive from Mexico and Central America.

"Mom," 12-year-old Heather called excitedly from outside, "I just saw a male hummingbird!" Our visitors had finally arrived.

Hummingbirds were so named by the early American colonists who were intrigued with their whirring wings, but it was the early Spanish explorers who referred to them as "joyas voladores" — flying jewels. This name seems more fitting. Anyone who has ever seen a hummingbird knows its iridescent plumage is spectacular — fiery red, metallic greens and blues, shining forth in a combination of gold, yellow and bronze.

The male hummingbird is the first spring arrival, and in a week or two he is joined by the females. Then the show begins. Hummingbirds of all species are quite aggressive and territorial; they simply won't tolerate another's presence. Their aerial displays are something to behold. They dive at such high speeds I've often wondered what damage would result if I happened to be at the wrong place at the wrong time.

Bringing 'Em In

Aside from commercially available hummingbird feeders, a number of flower species are known to be hummer favorites.

Planting some of these flowers may attract hummingbirds to your yard: azaleas, begonia, cardinal flower, clematis, columbine, coral bells, day lilies, geraniums, gladiolus, honeysuckle, horsechestnut, larkspur, petunias, phlox, rhododendron, sage, scabiosa, scarlet hamelia, snapdragon, spider plant, trumpet plant.

Last summer we were walking in the woods near our home when out of nowhere a hummer appeared. Only a few feet from us, he started swinging like a pendulum, arcing back and forth. We stood there spellbound until he disappeared as quickly as he had appeared.

A few days later we noticed this same behavior when we invaded his territory in the flower garden. Out in the yard, a female approached the feeder and he went into his arc swing again, this time for the entire length of the house.

These aren't the only displays hummers perform. Two hummingbirds facing one another will fly vertically, either in a see-



saw manner or eye-to-eye, twittering as they maneuver. They also fly horizontally in a simple back-and-forth motion. In either of these displays, the male or female may fan its tail as well. Experts aren't sure about this behavior, but some believe it is a courtship function as well as territorial defense.

Most Energetic

I admire the hummingbird not only for its beauty, but also for its natural — and at times incomprehensible — abilities. While it is the smallest of Pennsylvania's birds, it is also the most energetic warm-blooded creature on earth. A human consumes about 3,500 calories in a day; a hummingbird's daily intake, in human terms, would equal 155,000 calories, according to a U.S. Fish & Wildlife fact sheet. That's equivalent to eating 285 pounds of hamburgers or 370 pounds of potatoes each day.

The hummingbird must feed every 15 minutes to maintain its stamina. Most of this energy is exerted by the wings. A

hummingbird's wings beat at an astounding 55 strokes a second. It can also fly up to 60 miles an hour.

Another interesting characteristic is that some species of hummingbirds (there are more than 300 worldwide) can't walk. When they want to change stationary positions, they simply rise a few inches off the surface and land on the intended spot.

Even the female will do this if she wants to rearrange herself on her nest. Many times I've watched a ruby-throat preen itself in a birch tree outside my dining room window, but I have never seen it step from side to side.

Hummingbirds eat mostly nectar, although they also consume insects and spiders often found inside the tubular flowers on which the birds feed. With its long beak, a hummer can penetrate the depths of tubular-shaped flowers. Folded lengthwise inside its beak is a 3-inch tongue that is used much like a straw to extract sweet juices. Hummingbirds are attracted to red flowers, and at our house they compete with bumblebees for the huge red blooms of our rhododendron.

Hummingbird feeders are easy to find in hardware stores, and they allow families to observe the birds closely. One of our feeders is equipped with suction cups; it's attached to our dining room window, and we have watched the birds' antics countless times throughout the summer months. They stir a lot of interest among our dinner guests.

The shape of a feeder makes no difference to the hummingbirds. Any commercially made hummingbird feeder will do. However, the content of the feeder needs to be a properly mixed solution of sugar and water. The recommended mix is one part sugar to four parts water.

The water should be brought to a boil before the sugar is added and



HUMMINGBIRD NESTS are tiny, so small that they can be mistaken for a mere knot on a tree limb. Inside her painstakingly made nest, the female lays two minuscule eggs.

HUMMINGBIRD FEEDERS come in a variety of shapes and sizes. Look for these at hardware and lawn and garden stores.

then simmered until the sugar is completely dissolved. Cool till lukewarm before offering it to the hummingbirds. Do not add red food coloring to the mixture.

On hot summer days, feeders should be washed with a little vinegar and water to destroy any lingering bacteria. A small brush can be used to clean the inside of the bottle.

I had always wished I could find a hummingbird nest, and last year my dream came true. After a summer thunderstorm, we discovered one lying on the ground. These little nests are only the size of a half dollar with a height of one to two inches. To find one in a tree is rare because they are so well camouflaged they appear as just a knot on a limb.

Sole Builder

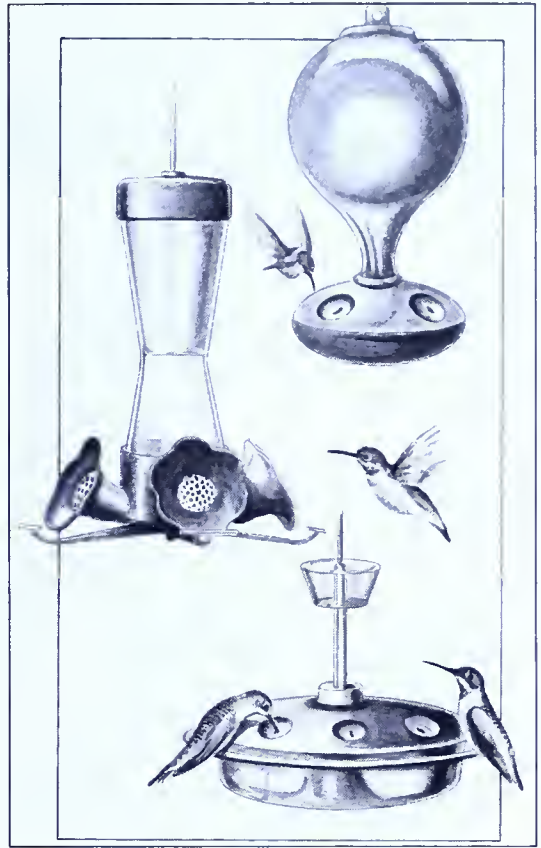
The female is the sole builder of the nest, and her abilities for construction are something to be admired. She starts with bud scales that she attaches to the limb with delicate spider silk.

Then she gently adds lichens and moss to the outside and plant down for a soft lining inside. The entire nest is woven together with a mixture of spider webs and saliva.

Two white pea-size eggs fit perfectly into the nest, and in 2½ weeks, the young hatch. Hummingbird hatchlings never develop down; they start immediately with pin feathers. Their diet consists of protein-rich insects that the female predigests in her crop before placing them deep into the tiny mouths with her beak.

Within a month, the young leave the confines of the nest, although the female will continue to feed her brood for a while longer.

The ruby-throated hummingbird has been a delight to watch for the last several years. Every year we learn more of its traits



and calls. It's a letdown to see September arrive for I know they will soon be among the other migrating flocks.

Their stamina for migration still remains a mystery. It was once believed that they hitchhiked on the backs of swans or other larger birds, but that has since been dismissed as folklore.

Nonstop

Hummingbirds can cross the Gulf of Mexico without stopping, and scientists assume the key is in the fat reserves that make up half their weight just prior to migration.

My summers would not be complete without hearing the buzzing and chitterings of the hummingbirds as they chase one another. There's never a dull moment when they're around. They are truly one of summer's most delightful and unpredictable visitors.

UNDERSTANDING Spring Gobblers

The turkey mating season is split into distinct phases, and the hunter who knows how to interpret the behavioral signs is way ahead of the game.

By Mike Raykovicz

MOST DEER HUNTERS understand the nature of the whitetail. They know, for example, that deer breed around the middle of November and that bucks are highly active at that time. The deer hunter understands, in part, the significance of deer rubs and scrapes. Most hunters who consistently fill their deer tags do so because they understand the habits of the game they are hunting.

Hunting turkey gobblers in the spring is just as complicated as hunting rutting whitetails. No doubt every hunter in the spring woods understands that this is the turkey mating season, and that by imitating the call of a female turkey a hunter can call a gobbler into gun range. The reason many hunters don't fill their tags is because they don't thoroughly understand turkey behavior during the breeding season.

What far too many turkey hunters fail to realize is that the spring breeding season is not one season but several. Allow me to explain.

Back in the late '60s, when Pennsylvania, New York and other states first offered spring turkey seasons, the sport was entirely new to everyone involved. After all, the American wild turkey was nearly extinct in the early part of this century, and over the years turkeys were strongly protected by game agencies and by the law.

As turkey numbers increased and wildlife managers learned more about the bird, it was discovered that spring hunting seasons could be offered without danger to the resource. This spring hunting season has met with overwhelming acceptance by an army of dedicated turkey hunters.

Most of us who hunted turkeys back then had little idea of what we were doing. There were no instructional cassette tapes we could listen to on our way to work; there were no videos we could play at home to show us how turkeys behave under various circumstances. What's more, there was precious little written about spring turkey hunting. What we learned we learned in the woods from the turkeys themselves.



If memory serves, an additional hurdle was inadvertently placed in our path during the first few years when opening dates seemed to vary greatly. One year the season opened on May 7, while the next year it was May 1.

The spring turkey season has opened on different dates every year. Even in recent years, Pennsylvania has had the spring turkey season open in late April and now has moved it to a May 1 start. Because of the variation of opening dates, hunters found turkeys in various stages of the breeding cycle. This has made the birds difficult to pattern.

Over the years I've learned a great deal about turkey behavior by watching them during the weeks prior to hunting season. I have discovered there are several stages to their spring mating behavior, and if a hunter understands these stages, he is more likely to fill his

hunting tag.



As I scouted turkeys in late March and early April, I discovered four distinct phases of turkey mating behavior. In early spring, I found turkeys in mixed flocks. Adult males travel with adult females and female birds of the year.

Even though the gobblers strut and display other mating behavior, the hens show no interest in the show of courtship. The toms gobble, strut and chase each other — only to be ignored by the hens. This behavior is sometimes found even in late April when some hunting seasons had already started.

Last spring, I failed to locate a single roosting tom prior to the season opener. One evening, however, I got a response from a hen that had already gone to roost. I slipped into the area the next morning and began to do some loud excited “cutting” or clucking. The response was immediate.

A thundering gobble broke the morning stillness and soon several other gobblers joined, heralding the beginning of another day. I suspected right off that I was dealing with a mixed flock of turkeys. The hen tipped me off the evening before, and five gobblers from five locations confirmed my suspicion.

Assemble By Sight

In previous years, I learned that turkeys in these circumstances get together by sight. That is, the hens would first fly to the ground while the gobblers remained in the trees until they saw the approaching hens. The whole flock would then get together and travel to the feeding area, usually an open field.

I decided that instead of wasting my time attempting to call a gobbler reluctant to leave the flock, I would wait for the birds at the field's edge. At least then I could see what was going on.

The birds were already on the ground, so I moved through the woods as quickly as I could, to a spot where I could survey an

WHEN TRYING to lure hens in the spring so a gobbler follows, answer them in kind. Cluck if they cluck and yelp if they yelp. Just do it more loudly and more aggressively.

open field and still have trees at the field's edge as cover. Unfortunately the turkeys had beat me to the field. I knelt beside a large birch tree and began to make some excited hen yelps.

Immediately, five gobblers answered my call, even though the hens gave no response. The hens were feeding away from me, so I thought I would call more vigorously. My call was answered by a gobbler about 80 yards away.

I was at an advantage because from my position I could see him clearly. The other gobblers were somewhere in the field with the hens, but because of the rolling terrain and high grass I was unable to see them.

The gobbler I could see was fanned out and definitely interested in my calls. More importantly, he was slowly heading my way. I hoped he would continue to advance along the path he had chosen and give me an opportunity for a shot. I decided to hurry things along with some excited yelping.

The other toms gobbled almost in unison, and I was sure I could kill one of them if I could only see them. The bird I was watching reacted to the other gobblers and began to run at a fast trot in my direction. I got ready for the shot.

Before he could get there, however, one of the other toms came walking out of a depression in the field and stood 20 yards away. He was an adult bird with a beard so long it touched the ground as he walked.

No one will ever accuse me of not taking the first opportunity that presents itself. The bird weighed almost 21 pounds, and as far as I know there were four others just like him that scattered with the shot.

When the flocks are mixed, it is sometimes difficult to get a gobbler to come to the call. Under these circumstances, calling to the hens will often work. Low submissive hen yelps won't do the trick, though. The hunter must use loud, aggressive calls, which indicate a new boss hen has entered the scene.

If a hen answers my calls, I answer her with the same call she is using. If she is clucking, I cluck back. If she is yelping, I yelp back, only louder and longer. This additional competition from another hen

is often more than the boss hen can stand. If she comes in the others will follow, and where the hens go, so go the gobblers.

Flock Breakup

As the breeding season progresses, gobblers and hens begin to break into smaller groups. If less dominant gobblers infringe on the dominant gobbler's territory, fierce fighting often breaks out. A number of years ago, I was preparing to work a tom that gobbled almost incessantly on the roost. It was early in the season and I set up about 80 yards from him. I had just sat down when I heard another tom gobble from a roost tree about 60 yards to my left.

Turkey Hunting Safety Tips

By now, spring turkey hunters should be aware that safety regulations require at least 100 square inches of fluorescent orange be worn while moving. We would also suggest that orange be worn or displayed at the calling location.

Here are some other safety guidelines that will help make your season safe and enjoyable.

- ♦ Positively identify your target. Be absolutely certain it's a legal turkey — one with a visible beard. And be sure your line of fire to the bird and beyond is clear.
- ♦ Stalking turkeys is illegal; hunting is by calling only. Get the bird to come to you.
- ♦ Assume every noise and movement is another hunter, not a turkey.
- ♦ Always set up against a tree, rock or other natural barrier that's at least as broad as your shoulders.
- ♦ If you spot another hunter moving in on your location, shout "Stop!" Never wave or make turkey sounds.
- ♦ Keep red, white and blue out of your clothing. These colors appear on gobblers in the spring.
- ♦ Preselect a zone of fire outside of which you will not shoot, especially when hunting with a partner.

By dumb luck, I had sat down between two excited gobblers. I did the usual tree yelps and other appropriate things and settled in for what I felt would be an exciting morning. The tom that was gobbling to my right was being answered gobble for gobble by the tom on my left.

I felt sure one of the two would come to my calls. To my astonishment, the gobbler on my right pitched from the tree and hit the ground running. He ran right past me in the direction of the other bird.

I had no choice but to head in the same direction he did and hope for a possible encounter with one of the birds. I moved about 40 yards to my left and got comfortable.

I no sooner picked up my gun when I saw two fans moving in circles. The first turkey had challenged the second bird and was not going to tend to any hens until he had driven off the intruder.

I watched as the two birds pecked and spurred one another. Before long, one chased off the other. I waited a bit, then called to the winner of the fight. He came charging in, offering me a clean shot. That bird also weighed 21 pounds.

During this part of the season, the adult male turkeys will generally answer any hen yelp. If the toms have just begun to gather hens, it is often possible to end a hunt shortly after the first answering gobble. If, however, the tom has a group of hens with him, it can be difficult if not impossible to get him to leave his harem for one hen.

Sometimes calling to the hens will get them all to come into gun range. If this fails, I resort to using a gobbler call. This can often get a reluctant gobbler to investigate the intrusion of another tom in his territory. The precautions that a hunter must take use when using a gobbler call —

in order that he not be mistaken for a legal turkey by another hunter — should be obvious.

Later in the season as the hens begin to breed, gobbling activity subsides. This is the time uninformed hunters quit hunting. Many get discouraged at the lack of gobbling, and even I will admit that getting out of bed at 3:45 a.m. to hunt an hour before work and not hear gobbling can get quite depressing. The smart turkey hunter will understand what is going on in the turkey kingdom and adjust accordingly.

If gobbling is sporadic or nonexistent, it is a safe bet the gobblers have several hens with them throughout the day and night. The adult males are not interested in acquiring additional females, so gobbling activity is minimal.

The birds travel together all day and roost near each other at night. In the morning they get together by sight or by making barely audible clucks and tree yelps.

During the morning, a hen may leave the harem to lay an egg but, for the most part, the birds remain close to one another. If the hens are actively laying, the hunter may hear an unsolicited gobble late in the morning. If most of the hens slip off to lay eggs, the gobbler may notice his harem has diminished to a point where he will answer a yelp made by a hunter. Good calling to a bird under these circumstances can often spell success.

Another way to hunt a gobbler with hens is to get between him and the hens before they come off the roost. Here the hunter must decide whether to drive off the hens in an attempt to isolate the gobbler or to wait for the turkeys to come out of the trees and hope the gobbler will meet the hens halfway.

If a hunter opts to drive off the hens, he



THERE'S MORE to spring gobbler hunting than many sportsmen think. The key to success lies in knowledge and experience.

must be sure they are far enough away from the gobbler so that he isn't frightened off as well.

Many times I have found myself in this situation and the decisions are never easy. These days, I pretty much wait for the hens to fly to the ground, and then I use loud, excited cutting to challenge them.

If the birds ignore my calls and get together, I mark the spot and return just before the end of legal shooting time. The hens may leave the gobbler to incubate their eggs, and he may find himself alone. A gobbler under these conditions is vulnerable.

As the days grow longer and the hens are incubating, the gobbler will find himself alone on the roost. Gobbling activity may again increase. In heavily hunted areas, gobblers may gobble only once or twice on the roost and then remain quiet for the rest of the morning.

It is imperative the hunter get close to the gobbler while the bird is still in the tree. If I hear a bird gobble at first light, I hurry through the woods in an attempt to get near enough. I want to be set up on that bird before he sails to the ground.

Gobblers that are hunted late in the season, such as the last week in May, usually will not respond to hen yelps. I'm not sure why, but it could be that they have been yelped to death by a horde of hunters and have grown suspicious of any yelp, real or otherwise.

If there has been no gobbling activity for a long period of time, perhaps a week or more, I forget about yelping and resort to loud excited clucking or "cutting." This is an especially effective call to use on cautious old gobblers that may have had previous encounters with hunters.

There are precious few places left where the birds have not been called or shot at. Most late season gobblers responding to a call must be coaxed for some time. Some of the most memorable hunts I have ever had occurred after 10 o'clock late in the season.

There is more to spring turkey hunting than many hunters think. The dedicated turkey hunters make an ongoing study of turkey behavior and turkey habits. They

Turkey with Orange Sauce

Ingredients:

1 10-lb. turkey
3 oranges
1 large onion
2 tbs. olive oil
salt and pepper
1/4 tsp. oregano
1/4 tsp. rosemary leaves
1 clove garlic
1 chicken bouillon cube
2/3 cup dry white wine
1/4 lb. butter, melted

For sauce:

3 tbs. butter
3 tbs. flour
1/2 cup dry white wine
1 1/2 cups turkey stock, pan juices

Dice unpeeled orange. Peel and dice onion. Mix in bowl with olive oil, salt, pepper and spices. Fill cavity of bird with this mixture and roast in 325-degree oven. Baste turkey frequently with a mixture made by combining dry white wine, melted butter, orange juice, garlic, bouillon cube, salt and pepper. Discard onion/orange stuffing before serving. For the sauce, combine melted butter, flour, wine, stock and pan juices (without fat) in a double boiler and stir until smooth.

From Pennsylvania Game Cookbook, available from the Game Commission, Dept. MS, 2001 Elmerton Ave., Harrisburg, PA 17110-9797. Cost is \$4, delivered.

know more about turkeys than just where turkeys are roosting and they know that turkeys are often unpredictable. The really good turkey hunters never hesitate to experiment with calling techniques and often resort to a whole bag of tricks learned through years of experience.

Spring turkey hunting is a chess game of moves and counter moves. The hunter who learns something each time he goes afield will be the one to eventually fill his tag.

Havens for Wildlife

Mine reclamation provides new game lands and better hunting for commonwealth sportsmen.

Ted J. Clutter

Pennsylvania Coal Association

PENNSYLVANIA RANKS as one of the top hunting states — and some of the best sport in the commonwealth is found on reclaimed coal mine sites. A crisp autumn day, good friends, a well-trained dog at your side . . .

Each year over the past decade, Pennsylvania coal operators have reclaimed some 15,000 acres of surface mined land. Most is returned to cropland, pasture and forest, but substantial acreages are reclaimed with an eye toward wildlife habitat and the hunting opportunities it provides.

Reclamation for wildlife takes added effort to create the wide diversity of vegetation that typifies a natural environment. But by planting woody shrubs such as barberry, crabapple, hawthorn and autumn olive on strip mined sites, coal operators provide food and cover for all sorts of wildlife, from rabbits and turkeys to songbirds and deer.

"We don't write off surface mines as being spoiled," says Barry Zaffuto, Game Commission land manager for Indiana and Cambria counties. "Done properly, surface mine reclamation can result in ideal havens for wildlife."

For operators interested in reclaiming sites for wildlife, the Game Commission offers technical assistance and provides free seedlings. "We also encourage a mix of grasses and legumes as cover crops," Zaffuto says. "It's a real smorgasbord for wildlife, and because of that, these lands attract a lot of hunters, too."

Dennis Reighard, president of the Elton



John Plowman

MINING is only a temporary disturbance, providing the area is properly reclaimed. The Commission has capitalized on the potential of these lands through cooperative access programs and land swaps.

Sportsmen's Club in Cambria County, agrees. "I've hunted turkey on reclaimed land, and was really amazed at the lush vegetation and quality of habitat." Like thousands of other hunters, Reighard is able to enjoy his sport on reclaimed lands thanks to the cooperation of coal operators and the Game Commission's public access programs.

Although most of the landowners participating in the commission's access programs are farmers, at least 120,000 acres owned by coal operators are open to public hunting through these programs. That figure doesn't include the thousands of acres of coal lands open to public use that aren't formally enrolled.

A good example is Wilmore Coal Co. of Windber, which has some 20,000 acres in the public access program. "We appreciate

the enjoyment of hunting and the need for wildlife habitat management,” says Wilmore President Anthony Sossong. “We have especially good hunting opportunities for deer and turkey on our lands, and the commission’s pheasant stocking program has been very successful here.”

Such environmental attitudes are also reflected by the surface miners’ desire to re-mine old, abandoned strip mines (AML), with subsequent high-quality reclamation that improves the environment — especially for wildlife.

The Game Commission takes full advantage of the options available through the coal deposits underlying many game lands. The agency looks for operators with properties adjacent to game lands who are willing to trade their acres for the state’s coal.

“We’ll accept royalties for coal in some instances but prefer land exchanges, instead, to enhance our game land system,” explains Gregory Grabowicz, director of the Bureau of Land Management. “Through a coal lease/land exchange program, operators gain access to reserves and add to our land base, with no tax dollars involved in expanding the public domain or repairing the environment.”

The Commission has participated in seven coal lease/land exchange projects since 1975, with operators reclaiming more than 1,400 acres of AML to wildlife habitat on state land. In exchange for its coal, the agency secured title to 30,000 acres of new game lands.

AML reclamation projects on game lands restore original contours and invariably better the quality of water discharged from the sites. Local fisheries are improved through elimination of acid drainage from abandoned underground mines, while newly created open water and marsh wetlands offer forage for waterfowl and other wildlife.

The result benefits the environment, local economies and, indeed, the entire commonwealth. But like many coal operators participating in such projects, John Bender, general manager of E.P. Bender Coal Co. in Carrolltown, is exasperated by continuing charges that surface mining destroys the land. Many of his company’s operations have reclaimed AML to wildlife habitat and involved coal lease land trades.

“A lot of people don’t understand what we’re accomplishing out here,” he says. “We’re reclaiming and revegetating areas for a diversity of species, and it makes that land a heck of a lot better for hunting and other outdoor activities, too, but this doesn’t happen overnight.”

“Mining is a temporary disturbance that can be a permanent improvement of wildlife habitat and provide better access for hunters,” confirms Sossong.

“More importantly,” adds Bender, “these areas are a lot safer because we eliminate old deep mines, caves, pits, highwalls and other hazards.”

Recognizing that the coal industry is burdened by an image forged when mine reclamation standards weren’t near what they are today, Zaffuto laments, “Coal operators really get a lot of bad press.”

Grabowicz agrees. “The coal industry suffers from an unfair backlash of public perception when it comes to surface mine reclamation and its benefits to wildlife.”

NOT ONLY does mine reclamation offer improved habitat for wildlife, it also makes for better access for hunters and increases the safety of an area by eliminating hazards such as highwalls.



John Plowman



FIRST IT WAS GRANDFATHER'S GUN, purchased from a 1923 Sears catalog. Then it passed to the father and on to the son. It took the author several seasons, but he finally bagged a pheasant with the old Crescent double.

The Tradition

By Carl W. McCardell

LIKE A SCENE from "The Waltons" TV series, Walter McCardell called his entire family to the kitchen table. The Sears & Roebuck catalog was brought forth and each individual was asked to list his or her idea as to the family's most important needs for the upcoming fall and winter. The year was 1923.

The four boys were primarily interested in tools, car accessories and toys. The three girls admired the clothing, doll houses and dolls. Louise, Walt's wife, concentrated on the "appliance and gadget" department.

Walt waited until everyone had had their say and then announced his top priority. It wasn't that the other things weren't important, but he had been dream-

ing of an item that was not only practical, but would also be fun to have.

"The old shotgun is about worn out," he spoke firmly to his attentive family. "It's time for a new one."

Walt had put a lot of meat on the table. Necessity had made him an outstanding shooter, but the old gun had to go. In fact, it had become dangerous to shoot.

Despite the financial hardships then, there would be enough cash for everyone to get their wish. The year had been a good one. The things that would not be given to the children right away would later find their way into the proper stocking come Christmas.

So, when the order was placed, the item

written at the top of the list was "One Crescent 12-gauge double-barreled 'hammer' shotgun with 30-inch barrels." The price was a whopping \$10.

Express mail service was hardly even dreamed of in 1923, and a long wait was in the making. When the packages finally arrived at the post office, Walt was as excited as his kids on the morning of Dec. 25.

As soon as he got home, Walt began to unwrap the package that was shaped unlike all the rest. He just knew that the others were either too small or did not weigh enough to be the one he was most interested in.

Opening the lid, Walt first noticed the hammers sticking straight up in the air. Any doubts he had as to why people called them "rabbit ears" were erased at first glance.

Examining each part to make sure his prize had not been damaged during shipment, Walt quickly became attached to the firearm. Imaginary rabbits came into view while he swung the long barrels through the kitchen.

All eyes were on the fine shotgun, but his youngest son, 8-year-old Sumner, nicknamed Hum by his little sister who could not pronounce his name, took particular interest in his dad's delight. It was as though he knew that he would eventually own the gun.

As soon as fall arrived, the Crescent was commissioned to bring home food for Walt's growing family. The lean years and the Depression that lay ahead would be tempered by the new piece of equipment. It would play a more prominent role in his family's well-being than anyone could've imagined at the time.

Walt was a better shot with the new gun than he had been with the old one. He would often astound his friends by making some long and difficult hits on rabbits. Later, when pheasants became abundant in the area, they were no match for Walt and his double.

Once, when a rabbit was cleanly missed by a barrage fired by three of his friends, Walt calmly raised his trusty gun and proceeded to up-end it. Everyone shook

their heads when they stepped off the distance. The shortened 100 paces probably put the rabbit at 65 or more yards from the end of the 30-inch barrels. Although surprised, Walt picked up the bunny and acted as though he made shots like that every day.

When the boys, in turn, became old enough to handle firearms they also used the Crescent double to bring home sustenance for the table. Elmer, Bill and "Mose" all had a chance to prove their hunting prowess. Walt had taught them well, and if they missed it wasn't the gun's fault.

Hum eventually got his opportunity to use the Crescent on a regular basis after his brothers became more involved with other activities. He found it to be a good shooter and often brought home a limit of game.

When the McCardell family moved near the village of Eagle, the Crescent proved its worth on the local pheasant population. A nearby marsh held dozens of birds, some of which became the center of attention when the family gathered together for Sunday dinner.

Louise knew how to complement roast pheasants with her culinary skills. The table was usually garnished with vegetables, picked from the family garden, made into taste-tempting dishes. A dessert of some sort of berry pie or, perhaps, cherry cake often topped the meal.

As the years went by most of the McCardell children had married and all had left home, but all lived within an easy hour's drive.

Bill's last hunt was when he was 17. A year later he was killed in the town of West Chester while warning some trolley riders of an unseen wire downed during an electrical storm. Bill warned them but accidentally stepped on another unseen wire.

Hum returned home after nearly five years in World War II. He had dearly missed home and was soon back in his favorite pheasant haunts.

Walt's age prohibited him from enjoying the kind of hunts he was used to having, so he rarely went on such outings. Hum was now responsible for putting meat on the table. The Crescent passed to the second generation.

Hum was married in 1948 to Mary Kulinich. The couple found themselves under the McCardell's roof after a stay with Mary's family. It was late in 1949 and they brought with them their baby son, Carl.

My first real recollection of the Crescent shotgun was after a hunt in 1955. Jack Gibson, a good friend of Hum's . . . er, ah, Dad's, had come over to hunt for small game.

Jack's beagles had taken the hunters through many briar patches and fields. I clearly remember the men emptying their game coats full of rabbits and squirrels. Dad had also gotten a pheasant.

I can't explain it, but I became a hunter that day. Only six years old, I wanted desperately to accompany my dad and his friend when they went again, and I also wanted to shoot a pheasant with the Crescent.

My only consolation on the days that they hunted was to "hunt" with my pop gun near Mom's flower beds. I brought home imaginary game and there was no limit to how many birds I could shoot.

I was 10 years old the first time Dad and I went for a hunt together; I was an observer. Hoping to see how Dad brought back game, I was shocked when he missed a cockbird with both barrels. The gaudy pheasant flew off without losing a single feather.

When I was 12, Dad bought me a 20-gauge double of my very own, minus the hammers. I must have picked up a bad habit from seeing Dad miss the pheasant two years earlier because it took me a couple seasons before I was able to connect.

For several years Dad and I spent many pleasant days afield. When I was 14, Dad

replaced the Crescent with a more modern 16-gauge Fox Model B.

When Dad was only 51, a slight stroke left him partially paralyzed for a couple of months. In another two months, he had virtually recovered, but I still wasn't prepared when he told me he'd rather not hunt during the upcoming season.

"You're old enough to hunt alone now and you can go through the fields better than I can," he told me.

The 16-gauge officially passed on to me, and I used it on occasion, but the stock did not fit me. In the meantime, for at least 10 years, the Crescent remained in an attic closet. The only time it saw light was when either of us cleaned it.

I vividly remember the day when the family shotgun was given to me. Dad had a far-away look in his eyes as if remembering when Pop-Pop gave him the gun many years before. I assured him I would care for it as he had done for so long.

The first thing I did as new owner of the Crescent was to take it to a friend who gave it

a thorough internal cleaning.

"The old shotgun is a better piece of workmanship than I thought," he told me. "Even though it has modern barrels, not Damascus ones, I'd still recommend the use of black powder shells. If you can't find any I can load up some for you."

At first, I fired a few shots at a few hand thrown claybirds. A couple of years later I used the gun to bag a few squirrels and even shot a pesky groundhog with it. With pheasants declining then, I didn't use the Crescent. I could consistently hit with my Remington 870, and I didn't want to waste the few opportunities I had.

Still, the nagging desire to bag a pheasant with the family shotgun never left my mind. Finally, one Thanksgiving Day sev-



THE AUTHOR poses with his father, Sumner McCardell. When he at last inherited the double-barrel, Carl used the gun to shoot squirrels.

eral years ago, I decided to take the gun for a walk. Getting a stocked bird or one at a shooting preserve would not do. I had to shoot an honest-to-goodness wild pheasant, and it had to be in the marsh behind the house.

It became a tradition. Every Thanksgiving found me with the Crescent in hand. Even when pheasants were plentiful, it was hard to find them late in the season. Now, with fewer birds to start the season, it was even more difficult.

The few times I did flush a pheasant, I'd push a safety that wasn't there or had trouble finding the hammers. The bird would be far out of range while I mumbled at my misfortune.

Dad passed away in 1989, and I desperately wanted to get a bird that season. I didn't so much as see a pheasant in the marsh that year, though, or the following season. They were there, however. Some friends and I had seen them on an adjoining property when we were out deer hunting.

The fall of 1991 arrived and my small game season was mostly devoted to pursuing ruffed grouse. But thoughts of the marsh entered my mind as Thanksgiving neared. Mom had called me and said that we were invited to dinner at Aunt Helen's once again and asked if I would pick her up at 12 o'clock. Just as I said that I would, I realized my annual pheasant hunt would be drastically shortened.

It was a crisp, slightly overcast Thanksgiving Day, with a little frost to nip at the nose. The smells and sights were enough to fill me with reminders from past hunts with Dad and other friends.

I have sole permission to hunt birds in the marsh. The owner graciously allowed area residents to keep hunting there after he purchased the parcel some 20 years ago. All the old-timers have died or moved away and those my age today prefer to hunt elsewhere.

This exclusive right was wonderful when birds were still plentiful, but now I hunt there more to just check out the land and rekindle old memories.

Arriving at 7:30, I was in no real hurry even though I knew I'd have to head home

in just three hours. That would leave me time to shave, shower and dress, and then pick up Mom to go to our turkey dinner.

I carefully chambered two black powder rounds and began my hunt. When cows used to roam the marsh, the vegetation was controlled by their appetites for the different grasses. Now the tussocks have gotten huge and briers have completely choked some areas.

Deer paths winding through the marsh make it easier to go from one end to the other. The owner does not allow deer hunting, but most hunters on the surrounding properties see the marsh as a preserve and breeding area.

An unusually large buck rub demanded my complete attention. "Boy is that ever a big one," I said aloud. Determining the maker of the marks to be a huge buck, I tried to visualize it in my mind. Then, after taking about a dozen steps, I stared in disbelief while a large cockbird flew toward me.

Apparently my prolonged visit at the buck rub had given the bird a nerve-racking experience. As the pheasant flew past me at 15 yards, my thumb cocked the hammer on the modified barrel. Before the pheasant put 10 more yards between us, a cloud of white smoke engulfed me. Stooping under the cloud, I saw my prize crash into the surrounding brush.

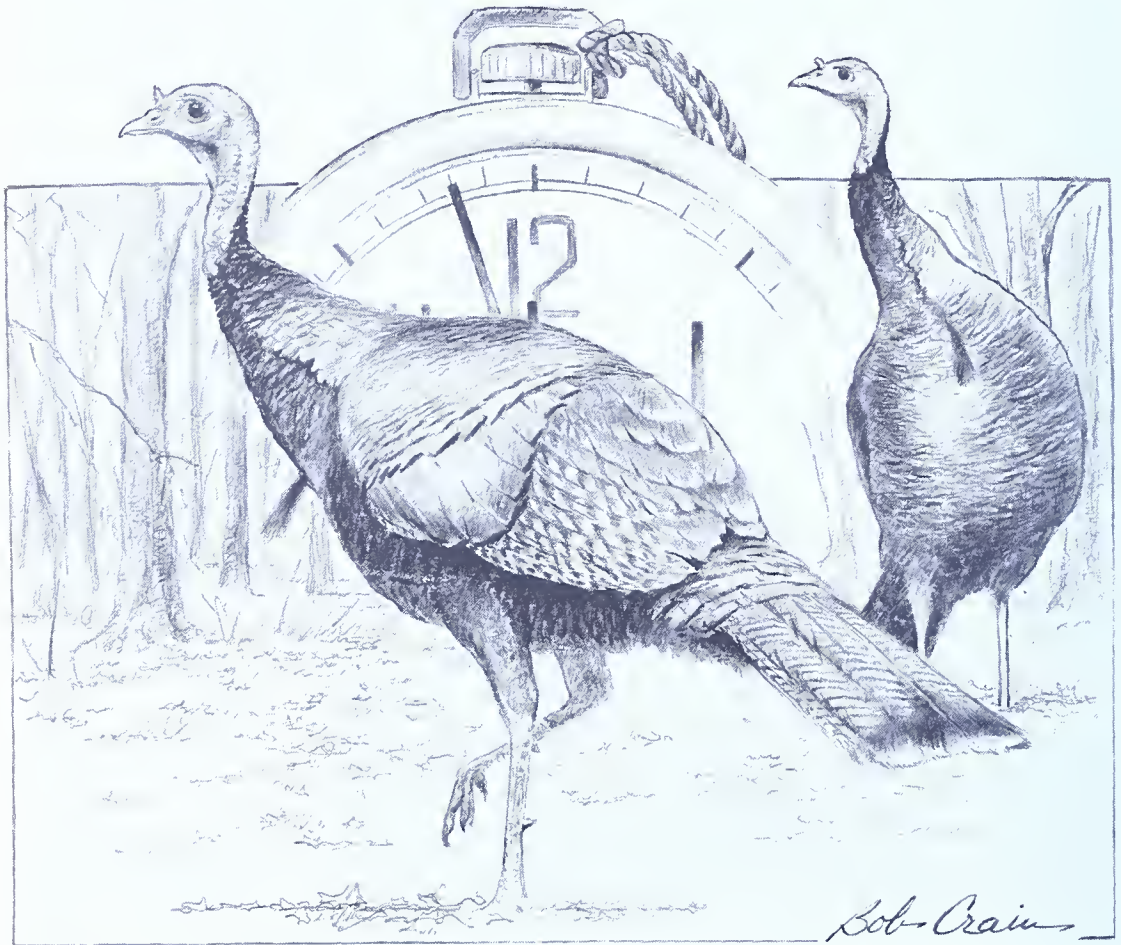
The first thing that caught my eye was the unbelievably long tail feathers. I had been measuring them for years and ones from 20 to 23 inches in length were considered long. These turned out to be 26 inches long.

At that instant, the years from 1923 to the present came together. I imagined my deceased Granddad's, Uncles' and Dad's approval as I admired the colorful bird.

I was like a kid and stopped to show the pheasant to several friends before driving home.

Later, while sitting around the Thanksgiving dinner table with my relatives from Mom's side of the family, the blessing was offered for the food. After the Amen was said I still had my head bowed and offered silently, "Thank you, Lord, for the tradition."

Last Minute Gobbler



The gobbler was just ahead of me . . . somewhere. Five minutes of legal shooting time remained.

I LOOKED AT MY WATCH. Only 45 minutes remained. My hunting buddy Mike Nosko and I were setting up for one last crack at filling a turkey tag.

I've heard that spring turkey hunting is an addiction. Marriages have failed and jobs have been lost, all due to unrelenting obsession some people have when it comes to pursuing a wild turkey. If spring turkey hunting is, indeed, an addiction, Mike and I definitely qualify as addicts. We take our turkey hunting seriously. We squeeze every minute out of every day. Our hunt isn't over until the clock says so.

Mike and I reside in Bradford County, an area that provides everything a turkey hunter could want. This particular opening day, however, found us across the border in Tioga County.

We started off the morning by hunting separately. I was carrying a gun while Mike chose to go after his turkey with

By Herb Pennington

a bow. By mid-morning, Mike had called in a group of three gobblers — two jakes and one respectable longbeard. He was hunting in fairly open woods, though, and his decoys apparently didn't distract the birds enough for him to draw his bow.

There was an hour of hunting time left when Mike came looking for me. I wasn't hard to find; my position was marked with a fluorescent orange safety alert band. Mike and I have long been strong advocates of fluorescent orange. We wear or display it both while moving and while calling.

Mike was pretty excited when he detailed his encounter with the trio of gobblers. "We've got time yet," he said. "Come with me. We're going after that boss gobbler."

We decided to double-team the birds, a tactic that has worked for us several times. Because I was carrying a shotgun, I was the designated shooter; Mike would do the calling.

After determining from which direction the turkey was most likely to approach, I positioned myself below Mike and the decoys in order to intercept an incoming bird.

The woods were silent except for an occasional call from Mike. It seemed an eternity had passed, but finally I heard a faint gobble in the distance. I looked at my watch — 15 minutes to go. I glanced at Mike and he nodded his head, acknowledging that he'd heard the gobble.

The gobblers became more frequent. And each subsequent gobble sounded a little louder. It was obvious the old gobbler was hot and coming in.

As my excitement mounted, I could just envision the old boy coming my way. And then the hemlock trees below me seemed to explode with a thundering gobble. He was right in front of me . . . somewhere. Five minutes remained. No problem, I thought. It's almost over.

THE WOODS were silent except for an occasional call from Mike. It seemed an eternity had passed, but finally I heard a faint gobble in the distance.

I strained my eyes, anxious for the gobbler to appear. He was so excited that he was gobbling almost nonstop. Several times I heard some short, abrupt gobbles that were distinctly different. It sounded like the boss might be bringing along a companion.

Mike knew we were running out of time and that the gobbler was hung up. He launched into some aggressive calling in a last-ditch effort to budge the elusive and wary bird.

It worked. I saw movement. A jake appeared, then a second. When another loud gobble boomed from the hemlocks, I realized that all three gobblers were coming in. But the boss had yet to make an appearance.

A quick glance at my watch told me that I might not have enough time to wait out the big bird. I scanned the hemlocks one last time and then decided to go for one of the jakes.

I raised my Winchester and carefully aimed at the lead bird. He was clucking and walking slowly toward one of the two decoys. When he stopped at an opening, I touched off a shot. Two ounces of No. 6s did the job.

The jake weighed 14½ pounds and sported a 5½-inch beard. While he wasn't the gobbler we'd set out for, he was still special. Mike and I consider every turkey a trophy, and this one would always be remembered as the "last minute gobbler."



Bringing Back the Chestnuts

An ambitious project germinated by a turkey hunting group hopes to put a once-abundant food back on wildlife's menu. — By Scott Westcott

BOB LOLLO leans closer to a chestnut sapling, studying a cluster of leaves glistening with morning dew and yellowed by the coming of autumn. Lollo thumbs the base of a leaf where tiny light brown buds have surfaced, promising more growth come springtime.

"This is a healthy tree," Lollo concludes. "See these buds starting. Yeah, this is a good healthy tree."

It's Lollo's hope that two decades from now this chest-high sapling growing behind a hunting camp nestled in Michaux State Forest will stand 50 feet high, its branches sagging under the weight of 200 pounds of meaty chestnuts ready to drop. He hopes the tree will be able to feed hungry turkeys, bears, squirrels and other wildlife.

This particular sapling is one of 20,000 hybrid chestnut trees growing in Pennsylvania and 70,000 planted nationwide as part of "Operation Chestnut," a program started by turkey hunters and being carried out by many organizations and individuals.

The reason for Operation Chestnut is painfully clear 80 miles from Michaux in Lollo's home county of Huntingdon. There, in a seemingly cruel and endless cycle, native American chestnut trees grow and die from chestnut blight. Shoots grow from old stumps, usually reaching about nine feet before the deadly blight appears. Bark starts to peel and canker-like sores plague the trunk. Leaves turn light brown, die and fall.

The blight spreads steadily through the tree, eventually infecting around the root



MIKE PINGER of the American Wild Turkey Society inspects a 3-year-old chestnut hybrid, a tree the group thinks may someday produce mast for wildlife.

collar and killing everything but the roots. The stubborn stumps often continue sending up new shoots, destined for the same fate. These effects of chestnut blight — combined with damage to oak trees by gypsy moths — has dramatically reduced the amount of mast available for wildlife.

"I remember the American chestnuts when I went up to my uncle's hunting camp as a kid," Lollo had said earlier as he drove his light blue truck up the winding road to the camp. "The trees had already

died in Lycoming County, but the farmers were still cutting wood for the camp and burning it in the wood stove. It would crackle and make all kinds of noise. I just thought it was all so neat. I'd like to see the trees come back.

"Besides," Lollo continues, braking for a stop sign, "bear and turkeys just love chestnuts. If you are in bear, turkey or deer country you better get up early and pick the nuts off the ground or you've lost them. That's just a fact of life."

So far, through Operation Chestnut, the hybrid trees have been planted from Erie to Philadelphia and in about every county in between. Of 33 states involved, Pennsylvania has moved to the forefront of Operation Chestnut. More than 28 percent of the 70,000 trees now have roots sunk in our forests and fields.

The American chestnut was once the dominant tree through most of the eastern United States. Besides being a key lumber source, the sweet nuts provided plentiful food for wildlife and were so tasty when roasted that they became an ingrained part of early American lore and tradition.

But then, in 1904, a batch of diseased logs imported from China infected some New York City trees with chestnut blight. Discovered here in Montgomery County in 1908, the blight hit at a time when nearly one in four trees in Pennsylvania's

forests were chestnuts, according to Barry Towers of the Department of Environmental Resources' Bureau of Forestry.

In 1911, Pennsylvania Governor John Tenner convened the state's Chestnut Blight Commission, appropriating \$275,000 to "repel the invader using every means known to science and practical experience."

The commission tried everything — cutting and burning trees, and coating trunks with kerosene, tar and petroleum. The commission even cut a one-mile wide fire break. Those efforts, however, were futile. The blight easily leaped the break and continued on its destructive and deadly course. By the 1930s the blight had exterminated an estimated one billion chestnut trees.

Environmental Disaster

"It was the greatest environmental disaster of all time," says Mike Pinger, president of the American Wild Turkey Society, the organization that founded and heads Operation Chestnut.

Today, throughout the eastern United States, virtually all the still living American chestnut trees follow the dismal pattern of those in Lollo's home county. Any nuts produced are measly and diseased.

Researchers have long been working to find a cure for the blight. So far, some Band-Aid remedies have been used with limited success, but no lasting cure has been discovered. Until a cure is found, says Lollo, Operation Chestnut will plant hybrids — the "next best thing" to the once plentiful native trees.

Averaging 200 pounds of mast a year, if all the 70,000 trees now planted would survive to maturity, according to Pinger, they could potentially produce 14 million pounds of mast every year.

Mike Pinger was turkey hunting on Chestnut Mountain in central Tennessee in 1987 when he stumbled across a blighted chestnut tree. The bark on the 40-foot tree



TURKEYS and other animals once dined on chestnuts, but soon after the turn of the century the chestnut blight struck. The disease killed off a dominant tree species.

was peeling, the trunk scarred with sores. Spiny seed burrs had been produced, but were void of meaty nuts. Next to the tree, a thick, old weathered chestnut stump was rotting away.

Pinger got to thinking what a shame it was that the native American chestnut tree had been all but wiped out. Knowing the importance of mast in the diet of wild turkeys and many other woodland animals, he set his mind to do something about the problem.

"I knew about the blight and thought some sort of restoration project would be a good idea — something hunters could do to restore a grand tree that was a predominant food for many kinds of wildlife."

That idea marked the beginning of Operation Chestnut, a project that today has Pinger versed in all aspects of chestnut trees. Pinger and American Wild Turkey Society members soon realized planting American chestnut trees was impossible. Research and discussions with nursery owners revealed blight-resistant native trees didn't exist and probably wouldn't for years to come — if ever.

Still determined, AWTS set out to find trees as close to the original American chestnut as possible. That was a harder task than they first expected. The trees they encountered were more akin to the Chinese chestnut. Chinese chestnuts — a familiar landscape tree in front yards around the country — are more like shrubs than trees.

Topping out at 20 to 30 feet, the Chinese variety reaches only half the size of a mature American chestnut. Even worse, the Chinese chestnut produces fewer and larger nuts (the size of golf balls) that are bland and sometimes bitter. By comparison, the nuts of healthy American chest-

nut trees are sweeter, smaller and produced in larger quantities.

Finally, after a long search, Pinger met a Tennessee nurseryman who owned two 46-year-old trees that were a hybrid cross between a native West Virginia sweet chestnut and the Chinese chestnut. The 50-foot-high trees nearly mirror the native American chestnuts, Pinger says. Each tree produces 200 pounds of small, sweet nuts at rate of 120 nuts per pound; Chinese nuts average 50 to 70 nuts per pound.

The trees also have potential to grow straight and tall like the American chestnut tree. Best of all, the trees have shown absolutely no signs of blight.

On public lands in central Pennsylvania about 350 hybrid chestnut trees now grow, thanks to the Pennsylvania Trappers Association.

"Considering what the gypsy moth has done to our oaks, we thought Operation

Chestnut was an ideal opportunity to do something for forest wildlife," says Fred Weber, legislative director for the trappers' association.

The PTA is just one of many organizations, along with scores of private citizens, who have been participating in Operation Chestnut in Pennsylvania since 1990.

It was shortly before 1990 that Bob Clark, a well-respected turkey hunter, author and former chairman of the Pennsylvania Forestry Association, became interested in Operation Chestnut.

Clark has maintained a longstanding concern about Pennsylvania forests. With acorns as the key mast crop in Pennsylvania, a valuable food source for turkeys, deer, squirrel and other wildlife was being devastated in some areas and threatened in others by the gypsy moth. Clark says as more and more oak trees disappear, maple



IT'S HOPED that the blight resistant hybrid can survive to produce mast. But blight is not the only peril the tree faces; it also has to contend with gypsy moths and other dangers.

Author

trees — which produce less food for wildlife — are growing back in their place.

"The amount of game is based on the amount of food," says Clark, a resident of Mechanicsburg. "Whether a deer produces one or two fawns largely depends on the amount of food available. Whether a turkey nests or not is often based on the amount of food available. Mother Nature sees to it that the system provides in good years for abundant numbers of wildlife. In bad years there's a reproductive reduction for animals."

Eventually, Clark believes Operation Chestnut could tip that natural balance in favor of increased wildlife populations. "It's just a small start, but eventually, as the trees grow and wild animals spread the nuts, it will regenerate the forests," says Clark. "At least it will be helping and it's constructive help."

DER's Barry Towers stops short of saying the hybrid chestnut tree will be the savior that replenishes Pennsylvania's forests. Towers says that despite the loss of "a tremendous amount" of oaks to gypsy moth infestations, there is more oak timber to-

day in Pennsylvania than there was 10 years ago.

In addition, chestnuts are just as likely to be targeted by gypsy moths, Towers says. "I don't think (Operation Chestnut) would be a negative, but I can't justify putting a chestnut out when it's just as likely to be defoliated and killed by gypsy moths as the oaks are. To put it out as a potential mast crop — that's not a bad idea."

Lollo agrees that the gypsy moths will hit chestnuts, but he still thinks the program has value. "We've got to put something out and people aren't putting out oaks," says Lollo.

Coordination Is Vital

Bill Shaffer, chief of the Game Commission's forestry division, thinks planting chestnuts on public land is a good idea, but he cautions the planters to coordinate their activities with the agency responsible for the property.

"It doesn't make sense to go out and plant a bunch of trees on, say, a game lands where we're planning a timber sale. All the work would be for nothing," Shaffer says.

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Those who've worked in the program say Operation Chestnut has gone beyond simply renewing chestnut populations — in many instances it's served to bridge the gap between sportsmen and women and the nonhunting community.

In many of the planting projects, garden clubs work side by side with hunters planting the trees. Both groups gain better understanding of one another and often come to realize their goals, for the most part, are the same.

"In a time when hunters are looked at as only takers from the environment, this project shows the nonhunting world that many of us are willing to give something back to the resource," Pinger says.

The chestnut tree planters have yet to see fruits from their labors. The hybrid strain does not start producing nuts for five to seven years. Pinger estimates that by 1994 or 1995 the first trees planted will start producing two to 30 pounds of nuts a year. So far, more than 90 percent of the trees that were planted have survived, but there are potential problems.

In general, the trees that are thriving were planted in more open, fertile areas where they were also protected by fencing to ward off hungry deer.

A Tougher Time

The trees in denser, forested areas, where soils have fewer nutrients and sunlight is limited, are having a tougher time surviving. In addition, the sweet chestnuts aren't the only part of the hybrid chestnut trees that deer love. The tender leaves and bark of the saplings are also an edible delight to whitetails.

Parasites and fungi also pose threats. "They are still susceptible to parasites," says Pinger. "They are not an invincible tree that can withstand everything. Any kind of tree in its first year is delicate."

AWTS has made some changes to improve survival rate. At the beginning of the program, trees were being shipped in the fall but had trouble surviving the tough winters. Now, the turkey society makes deliveries only in the spring, giving the trees a chance to get established before cold weather hits.

Still, data reveal the vast majority of trees are like the ones that Bob Clark planted in Cumberland County. With some tender loving care and maintenance, the chestnuts grow taller and stronger each year.

"The reward for me right now comes from babying them and watching them grow," says Clark. "When deer get at them, I put fencing around them. When there was an unusually dry period I tried to augment with a little more water than usual, to make sure they carried over."

"I think eventually it will make a difference. The main thing holding the program back is the availability of seedlings."

Indeed, even as Hurricane Andrew was whipping through Florida last August, torrential rain and spot tornadoes were battering Tennessee. Much of the nursery stock planned for the 1993 planting of Operation Chestnut was wiped out.

Last September, the program stopped taking orders for this spring's planting. Instead of the 16,000 trees destined for Pennsylvania and other states this year, only 6,000 will be planted. Of those, 4,000 will take root here.

Those involved with Operation Chestnut are not fazed by the setback. AWTS has started replacing chestnut orders by selling hazelnut trees as part of its Operation Habitat to keep interest high and also enhance habitat.

Projections for new chestnut seedlings for 1994 look promising. Pinger hopes that between 50,000 to 100,000 seedlings will be planted in 1994. From there, the goal is to plant a minimum of 50,000 a year, with hopes that a million will be planted by the year 2000.

If that were to occur, the wild turkeys, deer and bear of Pennsylvania could potentially feast on millions of pounds of chestnuts each year.

"I think hunters need to get involved in these kinds of projects," Clark says. "The bottom line to me is giving something worthwhile back to wildlife."

For more information on Operation Chestnut, send a self-addressed stamped envelope to American Wild Turkey Society, P.O. Box 6257, Sparta, TN 38583.



The Magic Season

By Guy L. Ridge

WE'RE A DEER HUNTING camp. Although we hunt hard during turkey and bear seasons, we mostly use this time to assess the local deer population in northcentral Pennsylvania. Since we hunt all three species in the same areas, we get in a lot of scouting time by the time deer season opens.

Although we didn't find any turkey or bear during the 1989 season, we did find deer. In addition to extensive sign in our favorite areas, we saw quite a few doe and several different buck. We had high hopes for the upcoming deer seasons.

When buck season finally arrived. We had five hunters in camp: myself, my dad, friends and camp co-owners Jack and Mike Hirsch, and my cousin Bob Haines. We made our final stand selections on Sunday afternoon and spent the evening enjoying the special camaraderie only deer camp can bring.

Dawn found me perched in my tree stand at the same spot where I had killed a 5-point on opening day the year

Although we didn't find any turkey or bear, we did find deer. We had high hopes for the upcoming deer seasons.

before. Although the forecast predicted mild weather, the temperature had dropped low enough during the night to leave a heavy frost on the forest floor.

The season was only about 15 minutes old when I began to hear the rustling sounds of a slowly walking deer. At first I couldn't pinpoint the location, but after some frantic searching I spotted a lone deer behind me. I got turned around just in time to see a rack as the deer walked into a small thicket.

It happened so quickly I didn't have time to get nervous. The 3-9x scope, set on low power, was trained on an opening, and as soon as the buck stepped into view I sent a handloaded 100-grain Nosler from my .257 Roberts on its way.

At the shot, the buck kicked up its hind legs like a bucking bronco and raced through the woods. I knew Mike was on stand below me, so I yelled for him to get ready. The buck never made it that far. After covering about 80 yards at full tilt, it collapsed.

The shakes hit me when I reached the buck. I sat on the heavy bodied 6-pointer to regain my composure. After a brief recovery period, I field-dressed the buck, tagged it and slipped a rope around its rack.

Even though it was downhill, the lack of snow and the logged out treetops made for a slow drag. Back at camp, the Game Commission's girth tape indicated the buck's live weight to be more than 200 pounds. That's unusually large for a Big Woods deer.

About mid-morning on the second day, Bob also hit a 6-point, but the buck traveled some distance before collapsing. Bob had trouble picking up the track on the snowless ground, so he wisely rounded up the rest of us to help in the

At first I couldn't pinpoint the sound's location, but after some frantic searching I spotted a lone deer behind me.

search. Unfortunately, another hunter found and claimed the buck just minutes before we arrived on the scene.

Dad, Mike and Jack hunted through Wednesday and saw lots of deer but couldn't put any horns on them. In view of the number of deer we'd seen, buck season ended with a good

prognosis for the upcoming antlerless season.

For me this was already a special deer season. I had just taken my third buck in as many years, and now I had a bonus tag that would allow me to hunt doe. During the previous year I had killed a bonus deer and I wondered if my lucky streak (six straight deer with the Ruger .257) would continue.

Although some think otherwise, taking a deer in antlerless season is no sure thing. One factor that makes doe hunting difficult in our area is the combination of heavy hunting pressure and bad winter weather that seems to make the deer bunch up into sizable herds.

It can make for a feast or famine scenario. The mountains are vast here. If one of these big herds comes past your stand, you feel like you've died and gone to deer hunters' heaven. If they don't come by, though, the Big Woods can look mighty empty.

I'll never forget one particular three-day doe season. I passed up small deer at



7 a.m. on opening day and never saw another deer, even though I hunted every day from dawn to quitting time. I can still feel the sense of isolation that occurs when you're alone in the woods, searching for a whitetail the closing hour on the last day.

Antlerless deer season is even more of a family tradition at our camp than buck season. A number of extended family members of the Hirsch and Ridge clans gather for the grand finale of our deer season. In all, we had nine hunters in camp, and with bonus tags we could take 14 deer.

Sunday evening began with the traditional pasta supper and the usual deer-related chatter. First day estimates ranged from two to six, while only one fantasizing member of our group suggested we'd fill all our tags.

We convened the usual strategy session. Cousin Bob and his son volunteered to act as scouts and hunt an area a few miles from camp where my dad had seen lots of deer during buck season.

The rest of us would spread out on the ridges near where I'd killed the 6-point.

Even though I had a buck in the freezer and

numerous deer seasons under my belt, I tossed and turned all night in anticipation. When the alarm went off at 4:30, we were pleasantly surprised to find that an overnight dusting of snow was being complemented by continued light snowfall. After a quick breakfast, we were off to our respective stands.

After dropping off my wife, Kathy, at her stand, I made my way via flashlight to my lucky tree. The soft, fresh snow was going to make this a great day for hunting, I thought — the kind of day when whitetails seem to materialize out of nowhere and vanish just as magically.

The first hour passed quietly. Even though there were six other hunters within earshot, I hadn't heard a single round fired. I was just beginning to doubt our stand selections when it began.

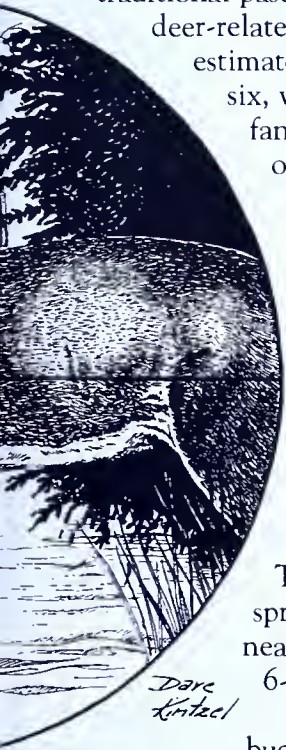
A shot rang out to my left. From the location I knew it was from Kathy's pre-64 Winchester Model 70. She shot again. At that instant I began to see movement above me. When Kathy's third shot boomed out, the woods around me seemed to explode with deer. A long string of doe galloped passed my stand, no more than 15 yards away.

I picked out a deer that was noticeably larger than the rest and shouldered the Roberts. I squeezed off a shot when she passed through a relatively open window in the underbrush. The deer staggered, ran about 20 yards, and piled up.

By this time the nearby ridges were reverberating with shots. I could hear my dad's .270 pump barking below me while Mike's .30-06 cracked off to my right. At the bottom of the ridge, Jack's .44 Mag. Smith & Wesson handgun chimed in while my father-in-law's Savage .358 boomed and echoed across the valley. Above me, Chris Lunt, Mike and Jack's brother-in-law, ran shells through his .243 Sako.

I suddenly realized that Kathy's gun had been silent for several minutes. I could still see deer running in her direction, so I yelled to alert her. Getting no answer, I yelled again. I couldn't believe her response. Kathy was

I suddenly realized that Kathy's gun had been silent for several minutes. I could still see deer running in her direction, so I yelled to alert her.



sure she had solid hits on the two deer she had shot at.

My thoughts jumped to my dad. He had hunted hard for the two previous buck and doe seasons without getting a shot. I knew he was shooting at running deer, and I wondered if he'd connected.

I tagged my deer and headed down to Kathy's stand. I found her shaking with excitement. Her first shot was a clean miss, but she felt her second and third shots had connected.

I told her to stay put and direct me to the shooting areas. Her instructions led me straight to her first deer, a good size year and a half old doe. Next she directed me to an area where I quickly found large splotches of blood and hair. Kathy came down to tag her first deer while I followed the blood trail.

After covering about 70 yards I spied Kathy's second deer. The .270 had done its job; the 130-grain bullet had entered behind the third rib on the right side and had exited the opposite shoulder.

When I tried to roll the deer over I realized how big it was. It turned out to be the largest doe taken in camp; the girth tape estimated the live weight to be 220 pounds.

While I was waiting for Kathy to drag her first deer down, Dad arrived. The smile on his face said it all. He

had already found one deer and felt sure he had scored on another. He agreed to wait for Kathy while I went up for my deer.

About that time Bob and Bobby appeared, toting a camcorder. They had scored shortly after legal shooting time. They said Jack and Mike had connected and were already at camp. That accounted for everyone except my father-in-law Carroll and Chris.

Only when we got our deer to camp did the magnitude of our success begin to sink in. There were nine deer to hang on the meat pole, and two hunters

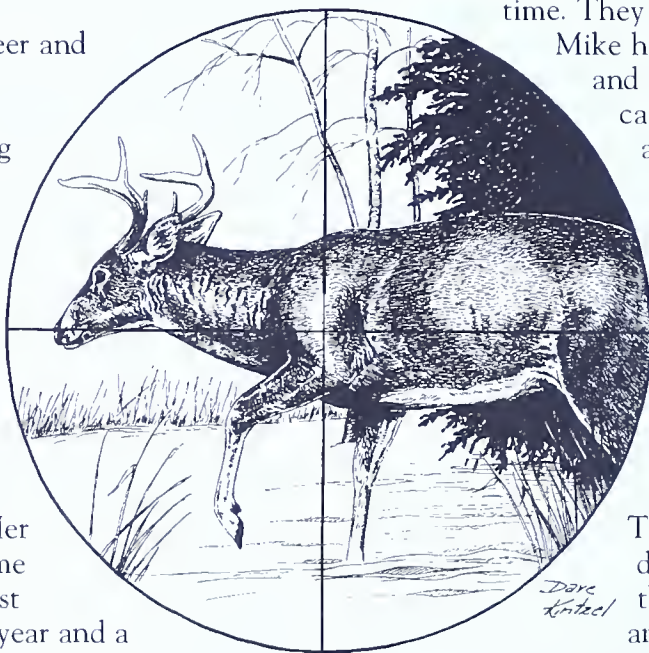
still hadn't been heard from. And Mike and Jack still had bonus tags.

About midway through the meat pole duties we spotted Chris trudging toward camp with two deer in tow. Shortly thereafter, Carroll appeared, dragging what turned out to be the second largest doe taken in camp.

By lunchtime there were 12 deer recorded on the camp roster. But it wasn't over. Late in the day Mike and Jack both took their bonus deer in the area Bob and Bobby had hunted.

The mood in camp that night was a mixture of jubilation and shock. The hunt was over. We had never before had such success, and all of our deer were taken by stand hunting on public land.

A short prayer of thanksgiving offered by my dad best summed up our collective feelings. It had truly been a magic season.



By lunchtime there were 12 deer recorded on the camp roster. But it wasn't over. Late in the day Mike and Jack both took their bonus deer.



FIELD NOTES



Snowshoe Brigade

BEDFORD COUNTY — During our snowbound antlerless season, I came on a group of hunters with makeshift snowshoes. One man had a pair of metal serving trays strapped to his feet, another used racks from the camp fridge, and a third had lashed plywood to his boots. Although their snowshoes left a lot of room for improvement, their perseverance paid off. Each harvested a deer. — WCO Jim Trombetto, New Enterprise.

Making A Difference

WESTMORELAND COUNTY — A recent call from a conscientious sportsman in my district resulted in the arrest of two individuals for illegal possession of six antlerless deer and parts of nine others. The fines will be large, the humiliation great, and a loss of license privileges is almost certain. Because hunting and trapping are coming under increasing fire, we can ill afford such illegal acts. Sportsmen can make a difference and have a direct impact on our image as safe and responsible citizens. — WCO Joseph V. Stefko, Greensburg.

Attention, Shoppers

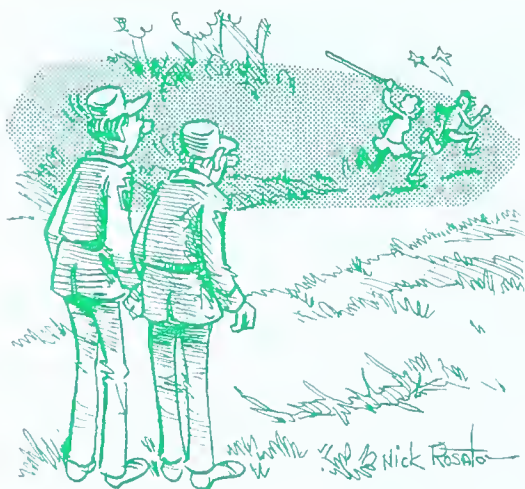
CRAWFORD COUNTY — Last deer season Deputy Ray Jones was checking a group of hunters at their vehicle. As Jones was checking licenses and identification, he asked one man where he'd purchased his license. The next hunter, anticipating the same question, was asked what his middle name was. There was a bit of laughter when the man replied "K-Mart." Jones soon found why "K-Mart" was so nervous: his firearm inside the vehicle was loaded. — WCO Mark A. Allegro, Meadville.

Who's More Nervous?

MONROE COUNTY — I'd live-trapped a beaver and left it in my garage until I could relocate it. To keep the animal calm I covered it with a blanket. My plan backfired, though, when my wife and daughter Ashley came home. Curiosity got the best of Ashley, and when she peeked under the blanket the beaver peeked out. The cover went flying as Ashley jumped back, leaving the nervous beaver slapping its tail on the concrete floor. — WCO Thomas M. Smith, Bartonsville.

A New Appreciation

INDIANACOUNTY — A recent stint in the regional office filling in for dispatchers attending a training conference was educational. I had to answer a wide variety of questions, and I came away with a new understanding and appreciation for what our dispatchers do. Between the phone calls, radio calls and assorted noise, I found myself anxious to get back to the peace and quiet of my district. It wasn't even a busy day. My hat's off to the dispatchers. — WCO Melvin A. Schake, Homer City.



Just One Favor

ELK COUNTY — We were working a deer decoy to catch roadhunters when one guy shot and knocked over the decoy. As we cited him, he asked the deputies if he could keep the deer. They explained that the decoy wasn't real, but the man still had one more request. Before he walked to his car to explain to his wife that he'd shot a decoy, he asked the deputies if they'd come to his rescue when she began beating on him. — WCO Dick Bodenhorn, Ridgway.

That's A New One

McKEAN COUNTY — A muzzle-loader hunter told me how, after a week of hunting, he finally got close enough for a good shot. But when he went to kneel down for a steady position, his knees cracked so loudly they spooked the deer. — WCO John P. Dzemyan, Smethport.

There's A Reason

SNYDER COUNTY — Last December I investigated three self-inflicted hunting accidents involving two 12-year-olds and a 13-year-old. There's a reason juveniles have to be accompanied by an adult, but there shouldn't have to be a law. Parents should take the time to teach their children and then closely accompany them in the woods. The sport will certainly be more enjoyable, and tragedies will be much less likely. — WCO John Roller, Beavertown.

Stone Cold

ALLEGHENY COUNTY — Responding to a call about an injured deer, I arrived to find an elderly couple standing near the animal. They were filled with concern, and I asked them to step back because I was going to have to dispatch the deer. I approached cautiously, not wanting the animal to spook and run into traffic. But I noticed the deer was unusually docile, and when I nudged the animal I discovered why: It had frozen solid in a sitting position. I quickly looked around to see who was watching and then rapidly removed the not so injured deer. — WCO Richard T. Cramer, White Oak.

A Little Late

TIOGA COUNTY — During the second week of buck season, I watched a man dress, skin and quarter a deer, and then put the meat in a large plastic bag. I suspected an illegal kill, and when I tried to apprehend the man, he dropped the bag and fled. He ran down the mountain, through a stream and hid in the basement of a home that wasn't his. When I went to the basement to apprehend him, the man came out behind a bed and said: "Oh, officer, I'm glad you're here. I want to report shooting a doe by mistake." — WCO Steve Gehringer, Mansfield.

A Dog of A Party

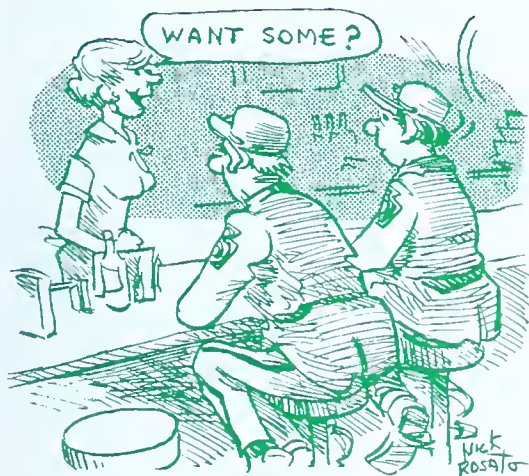
ADAMS COUNTY — If you lose your hunting dog, leave something behind the dog is familiar with, such as a hunting coat. When the dog finds the item, it will likely remain there until you return. Deputy Ron Sadler suggested that to a local man, and it worked. Everyone was so happy about the dog's return that they threw a party and invited Ron. Ron couldn't attend because we were working a deer case that lasted all night. We missed dinner, too, and Ron and I agreed a couple dog biscuits would've tasted pretty good. — WCO Larry Haynes, Gettysburg.

Gift to the Next Generation

CAMERON COUNTY — When Larry J. Lombardo of Painesville, OH, won a new Remington rimfire at the Sinnemahoning Sportsmen Association's raffle, he contacted me. He said he wanted to donate the rifle to a local youngster. Working with the club's directors, we selected Leo Smith, Jr., of Huntley. Larry's generous act has made it possible for another youngster to join our ranks. — WCO Joe Carlos, Driftwood.

Not So Skilled

BUTLER COUNTY — I always thought great blue herons were skillful predators — until Deputy Gary Toward found one that had attempted to swallow a fairly large bass tail first. The fish became stuck, and its spines punctured the heron's throat. Deputy Toward was able to remove the fish, but he couldn't save the bird. — WCO Dale E. Hockenberry, East Butler.



What's Cookin'?

BRADFORD COUNTY — I now have proof that years of picking up roadkills can affect a person's sense of smell. Tioga County WCO Steve Gehringer and I stopped at a restaurant for some coffee. When the waitress came to take our order, Steve said: "Something smells really good in here. What's on the grill?" The waitress then told him they were cleaning the grill and what he smelled was grill cleaner. — WCO William A. Bower, Troy.

And Works Well

WAYNE COUNTY — Last archery season, Steve Livingston of New Hampshire saw an individual shoot a deer from the window of a pickup. Steve left his stand to report the incident. He not only gave up a day of hunting to return to the scene with officers, but he later returned to Pennsylvania at his own expense to testify against the poacher. The SPORT program works because of people like Steve. — WCO Frank J. Dooley, Moscow.

On the Same Side

VENANGOCOUNTY — With all the media attention given to “confrontations” between farmers and the agency, I’m sure many people think we’re at odds with one another. Nothing could be further from the truth; many farmers love wildlife as much as we do. Harris Dreibelbis, one of my Safety Zone cooperators, recently donated more than 100 bushels of oats and 1,000 bushels of corn to help the Commission plant and provide food for wildlife. — WCO Leonard C. Hribar, Seneca.

Mother of Invention?

CAMBRIA COUNTY — Last antlerless season the deep snow kept many hunters from getting to their favorite spots. But I know of an inventive father/son team that strapped oven racks to their boots to get around. It certainly seemed practical, but I wonder if Mom appreciated their ingenuity. — WCO Shawn E. Harshaw, Nanty Glo.

Just a Reminder

CLINTON COUNTY — Last year a man called about a newborn fawn that had been lying in the same spot for four days. He said he was sure the mother wasn't around and thought perhaps the doe had been killed. I got to his home in time to see the fawn bounding up to the mother in a field. Our preaching about leaving wildlife alone may be having some effect. — WCO Robert W. Norbeck, Mill Hall.

Expensive Oversight

MERCER COUNTY — Last season I dealt with a man who had not properly tagged his deer. He hadn't completely filled out the tag; he hadn't even removed it from his license and placed it on the deer. He offered a lot of weak excuses, all the time insisting he would never try to take a deer illegally. What really bothered me was when I showed him in the digest what the tagging requirements are. He said he'd never looked at the booklet before. — WCO Donald G. Chaybin, Greenville.

Costly Diversion

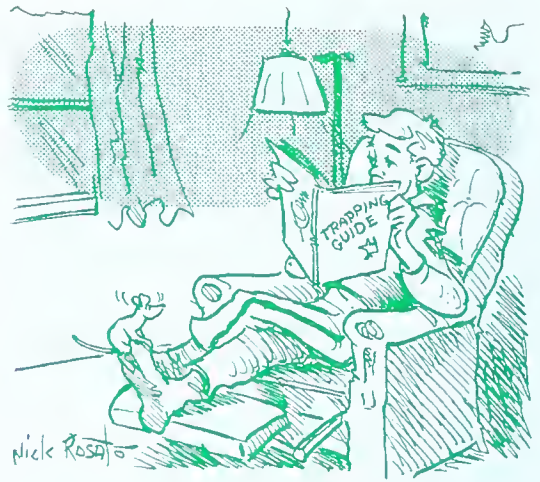
We have almost 30,000 acres of game lands in Mercer and Venango counties; "we" are you and me — the people of the commonwealth. The land is ours to use, free of charge, for hunting, hiking, fishing and so forth. Unfortunately, a small number of people abuse our property. Land managers prefer to spend time and money enhancing habitat rather than picking up garbage, repairing gates and equipment, and other tasks forced on us by slobs. — LMO James Deniker, Sandy Lake.

When It Rains, It Pours

SOMERSET COUNTY — WCOs and deputies often keep lists of people who want to receive roadkills. Last December, Deputy Robert Turner called Kevin Lape about a roadkill he'd just brought in. After months of waiting for a good one, Kevin was thrilled to get the meat. He met with Deputy Turner to get the deer and the permit. On the way home, he hit a deer with his car. — WCO Clifford E. Guindon, Jr., Boswell.

Not Looking Forward to It

It seems that only a few years ago I was anxiously anticipating my first hunting season as a WCO. Well, that was 30 some years ago, and I'm not nearly as excited that this will be my last year as a Commission officer. — LMO Robert H. Muir, Kittanning.



Problems At Home

LYCOMING COUNTY — I've now had extensive experience handling animal complaints, and I've trapped and transported bears, beavers, raccoons, skunks, geese, and even hawks and owls. With a whole year of WCO experience under my belt, I'm confident I can take care of any complaint. But I still can't figure out how to get rid of the mice in my house. — WCO Terry D. Wills, Williamsport.

Starting Out Wrong

LYCOMING COUNTY — While using a deer decoy to deter roadhunting, we watched two fathers instruct and allow their sons to take a shot after alighting from a vehicle. So much for adult supervision. The good news is that the game law lets us charge the adult in cases like this. And we did. — WCO Ron Stout, Jersey Shore.

Same Old Story

POTTER COUNTY — I helped the Fish and Boat Commission conduct a trout survey in a local stream. I already knew the stream was good trout water, but I was surprised at the large number of trout it held — many fish were 18-inch natives. As we finished, a fisherman approached me and said the stream had been "fished out" for weeks. Now I know that waterways conservation officers hear the same kind of stories I do. — WCO William C. Ragosta, Coudersport.

Unusual Sighting

CRAWFORD COUNTY — Last beaver season, local trapper and fur buyer Gene Miller saw a river otter near Pymatuning. The otter may have been one introduced into the Shenango drainage by the state of Ohio. I'm sure there are enough forage fish at the spillway to feed the otter for a lifetime. — WCO Dave Myers, Linesville.

Not Too Bright

MONTGOMERY COUNTY — Just three weeks after being arrested for jacklighting an 11-point buck, the same man was apprehended for cutting holes in pheasant pens at the Eastern Game Farm. The man released more than 100 birds and hunted them all day without flushing a single cockbird. It's not hard to imagine the man's embarrassment when we told him the pens he cut contained only hens. The birds cost him \$13.50 apiece, and he didn't even get to shoot one. — WCO R.W. Johnson, Red Hill.

Saving Space

CHESTER COUNTY — Land development is destroying wildlife habitat and open space at an alarming rate. Last spring I stopped at a woodlot teeming with migrating warblers that were feeding in the treetops and the understory. Since then, the lot has been developed. I hope the warblers will be able to find another place to rest and feed on their way through this year. But what about the future? If you're looking to get rid of some land, consider selling it to the Game Commission. We'll manage it for wildlife and for the future. — WCO Steve Bernardi, Atglen.

Excellent Record

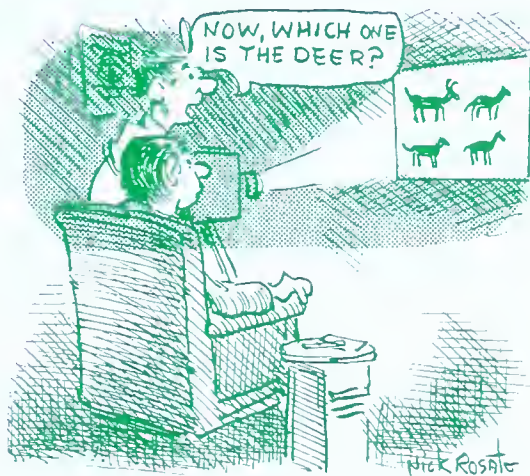
PERRY COUNTY — The excellent safety record achieved by hunters last fall proves that fluorescent orange works. Spring turkey hunters are required to wear 100 square inches of orange while moving. Although it's not required, you should wear or display it while calling, too. — WCO Jim Brown, Loysville.

Little Effect

FOREST COUNTY — When three feet of snow fell here in December I was concerned how it would affect our turkey population. I did some checking and found the birds were unaffected; they are still plentiful, although they were spending a lot of time in pine plantation cover. I heard of about 100 birds in two flocks in the Loleta Road area. There should be plenty of turkeys around this spring. — WCO Alfred N. Pedder, Marienville.

Show-Off

LUZERNE COUNTY — While visiting family just outside Philadelphia over the holidays, we were treated to a turkey exhibition outside a church. A male and female were scratching and feeding around some shrubs, and when the service ended the tom put on a strutting display in front of about a hundred churchgoers. Maybe he was looking for someone to take up a collection. — WCO Edward J. Zindell, Wilkes-Barre.



Not a Bad Idea

LANCASTER COUNTY — I hear a lot of excuses for missing deer. One flintlock hunter told me he was going to get his eyes checked because he'd missed eight deer during muzzleloader season. When you think about it, an eye exam isn't a bad idea — especially for those shooting guns with metallic sights. — WCO Linda L. Swank, Quarryville.

Hunting accidents down in 1992

PENNSYLVANIA HUNTERS enjoyed one of the safest years on record in 1992, according to statistics compiled for the Commission's annual hunting accident report.

Three fatal accidents were the fewest in any year since figures were first recorded in 1915. The total number of hunting accidents, 100, is the second lowest for any year since 1915. Records show only 67 accidents occurred in 1918. However, Pennsylvania had only 311,768 licensed hunters back then, compared to more than one million today.

Major strides in reducing the number of accidents in '92 came in the category of turkey hunting. There were only 14 turkey hunting accidents, none fatal, in spring and fall seasons combined, compared to 53 — including two fatalities — in 1991.

New safety regulations requiring small game and turkey hunters to wear 250 square inches of fluorescent orange took effect last fall. Fall turkey hunting accidents plummeted from 37 with two fatalities in 1991 to just six nonfatals in '92.

Even more encouraging was the fact that only two of the 1992 fall season turkey accidents involved victims mistaken for game. In the previous decade (1982-91), an average of 22.8 turkey accidents occurred each fall. During that same period, an annual average of 16.4 victims were shot in mistake for game in the fall turkey seasons.

New safety regulations for spring gobbler hunters take effect this season. Spring turkey hunters will have to wear 100 square inches of orange while moving. The orange does not have to be displayed at the calling location, but its use is strongly recommended.

More than a quarter (27) of all accidents were self-inflicted, according to Hunter-Trapper Education chief Jim Filkosky. "In most cases these self-inflicted accidents were the result of careless firearms handling," he said.

Filkosky noted that 21 of the accidents in the self-inflicted category took place

during deer seasons. One resulted in a fatality.

Archery deer hunters were involved in four nonfatal accidents in 1992. Two of those accidents were mistake for game. "Being positively sure of your target and what is beyond it before pulling the trigger or releasing an arrow would prevent a great number of mistake for game accidents," Filkosky said.

Victims in the line of fire accounted for 27 accidents, including one fatality.

Shotguns were involved in more than half of all accidents and two out of the three fatalities.

Poor weather and dim light conditions were not found to be contributing factors in the vast majority of accident investigations. More than half of all accidents took place in dense cover, however. That indicates proper target identification and visibility are critical safety considerations.

Well over half (57) of the offenders had at least 10 years of hunting experience. In fact, no first- or second-year hunters were involved in any of the accidents. That supports the theory that recent exposure to a hunter-ed course and close supervision by a parent or guardian translates to safe hunting practices.

Based on approximately 1.1 million hunting licenses issued in '92, the accident rate per 100,000 hunters was 8.51. Using the same comparison for 1918 (when there were 67 accidents but only 311,768 hunters) the accident rate for that year would be 21.49.



1992 Hunting Accident Report

Summary of Casualties

Fatal

♦ Self-inflicted	1
♦ Inflicted by others	2

Nonfatal

♦ Self-inflicted	26
♦ Inflicted by others	71

Total	100
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Sporting Arm Used

	<u>F</u>	<u>NF</u>	<u>T</u>
Shotgun	2	56	58
Rifle	1	35	36
Bow	0	4	4
Revolver	0	2	2

Species Hunted

	<u>F</u>	<u>NF</u>	<u>T</u>
Deer			
♦ Regular Season	2	33	35
♦ Archery	0	4	4
Bear	0	2	2
Turkey			
♦ Spring	0	8	8
♦ Fall	0	6	6
Pheasant	0	4	4
Squirrel	1	9	10
Rabbit	0	16	16
Grouse	0	6	6
Woodchuck	0	1	1
Woodcock	0	1	1
Dove	0	1	1
Duck	0	1	1
Fox	0	1	1
Raccoon	0	1	1
Crow	0	2	2

Age of Persons Inflicting Injury

	<u>F</u>	<u>NF</u>	<u>T</u>
12 to 15	0	10	10
16 to 20	1	16	17
21 to 50	2	51	53
Over 50	0	7	7
Not reported	0	13	13

Light Conditions

	<u>F</u>	<u>NF</u>	<u>T</u>
Dawn	0	6	6
Daylight	3	85	88
Dusk	0	3	3
Dark	0	3	3

Weather Conditions

	<u>F</u>	<u>NF</u>	<u>T</u>
Clear	1	53	54
Overcast	2	30	32
Rain	0	6	6
Snow	0	7	7
Fog	0	1	1

Cause of Accident

	<u>F</u>	<u>NF</u>	<u>T</u>
Dangerous position of sporting arm	2	8	10
Accidental discharge	0	16	16
Ricochet	0	6	6
Stray shot	0	9	9
Line of fire	1	26	27
Slipped and/or fell	0	8	8
Dropped sporting arm	0	5	5
Mistaken for game	0	16	16
Defective sporting arm	0	2	2
Unknown	0	1	1

Mistaken for Game (species hunted)

	<u>F</u>	<u>NF</u>	<u>T</u>
Deer	0	5	5
Bear	0	1	1
Turkey	0	7	7
Squirrel	0	1	1
Rabbit	0	1	1
Fox	0	1	1

Mistaken for Game Distances (feet)

	<u>F</u>	<u>NF</u>	<u>T</u>
26 to 75	0	6	6
76 to 150	0	6	6
151 to 300	0	4	4

Place of Accident

	<u>F</u>	<u>NF</u>	<u>T</u>
Field	1	20	21
Woodland	1	67	68
Road or highway	1	7	8
Marsh or bog	0	1	1
Vehicle	0	2	2

Man fined for illegal bear parts

A New Jersey man was arrested and charged in February with the illegal sale of 34 bear gallbladders.

Robert N. Spina, Jr., of Tenafly, NJ, was charged with multiple violations of the Game and Wildlife Code after he sold the gallbladders to undercover officers of the Game Commission and U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service.

Spina pleaded guilty to the charges, which were filed by WCO Thomas Smith of Monroe County.

The 29-year-old Spina had been

the subject of an investigation that lasted nearly a year. The gallbladders he was convicted of selling allegedly came from animals taken in California.

Spina was sentenced to pay more than \$40,000 in fines.

This is the second illegal trafficking case to come out of Monroe County in just over a year. In January 1992, more than 40 charges were filed against seven people for selling whole black bears, bear gallbladders, bear paws and velvet deer antlers.

Get ready for June hunter-ed shoot

The Commission will hold its annual Youth Hunter Education Shooting Program on June 12. The shoot will take place on SGL 226 near Millville in Columbia County.

The program will test students' skills in riflery, archery, shotgun and wildlife identification. The winning junior and senior teams, along with the top five junior and senior individuals not on winning teams, will be invited to represent Pennsylvania at the National Rifle Association Youth Hunter Education Challenge in Raton, NM, later this summer.

Pennsylvania's program gives young hunter-ed students from across the state the chance to develop their hunting-related skills. Last year more

than 100 youths took advantage of the opportunity to learn more about safety and responsibility in the field.

Individual and team competition is offered in junior and senior categories: participants ages 12 through 14 are classified as juniors; 15 through 19 are considered seniors. All participants must have completed an approved hunter-ed course.

For more information regarding the competition, write PGC Information & Education Bureau, P.O. Box 220, Dallas, PA 18612-0220, or call (717) 675-1143.

People with disabilities who anticipate the need for special accommodations should contact the office no later than June 4.

Project WILD workshops set for Pymatuning

The Pymatuning Wildlife Management Area Visitors Center will be the site of two day-long Project WILD workshops on April 24 and May 1.

The workshops are designed for teachers and other youth leaders who are interested in wildlife education.

Project WILD is a hands-on approach to teaching environmental issues to students from kindergarten through 12th grade.

Participants must pre-register by April 14. For more information, call (814) 432-3187.

PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES who require special assistance at Game Commission public functions should contact the telephone number listed with the announcement, the appropriate region office or the Harrisburg headquarters. Toll-free numbers for each region are listed in every issue of *Game News*; the Harrisburg number is (717) 787-4250.

Kempton youth wins conservation contest

A Berks County teen and two youths from Somerset County recently earned top honors in the Commission's Wildlife Conservation Project Program.

Jessie Rabert of Kempton won the statewide contest, earning a \$125 cash prize in the process. The Kutztown High School senior placed third in last year's competition.

Eric Fritz of Stoystown, a junior at Somerset County Area Vocational Technical School, placed second and received \$100. Fellow vo-tech student David Creamer of Berlin took third place and won \$75.

The annual conservation project

program recognizes vo-ag students who have performed wildlife habitat improvement projects in the past year. Students record their conservation activities and on-site wildlife sightings in a daily log.

Rabert's project included building a large pen in which he reared game birds, feeding wildlife, developing a wildlife food plot, and picking up litter.

"Jesse shows real initiative in working with nature and the Future Farmers of America," said Daniel Lynch, agriculture science instructor at Kutztown High.

Heavyweight bear makes record book

The 701-pound Carbon County bear killed by Keith A. Boyer last season has been officially scored at 22¹⁰/₁₆. That score makes it the second largest bear ever taken in the state and tentatively places it fifth on the Boone & Crockett list.

Boyer, a Fleetwood resident, harvested the bear on opening day. Its

estimated live weight was 827 pounds, the heaviest bear ever harvested here.

Boyer's trophy was 1/16th point behind the bear killed by Chad Reed in 1991. When Boyer enters his bruin, three Pennsylvania black bears will likely rank among the five largest in the world, as listed by Boone & Crockett.

Middle Creek, Pymatuning lectures underway

Lectures at the Middle Creek Wildlife Management Area Visitors Center, located near Kleinfeltersville, begin at 7:30 p.m.

Scheduled for the next several weeks are "Pennsylvania Mountain Man" by WCO George Mock, April 21-22; "Springtime Wild Turkeys by PGC Biologist Arnold Hayden, May

5-6; and "The Miracles of Nature — A Walk Through the Year" by naturalist J. Carl Nolt, May 19-20.

Lectures at the Pymatuning Wildlife Management Area Visitors Center, located near Linesville, begin at 2 p.m.

Coming up is "Wild Turkey" by WCO David Beinhour, April 17.

First-timers should take hunter-ed early

Due to changes in the antlerless license application process, it's important for first-time hunters to take the required Hunter-Trapper Education Course as early as possible.

The timetable for antlerless license application has been pushed back to Aug. 2 this year. A county-specific antlerless license is now required to

harvest an antlerless deer in all deer seasons except flintlock.

Muzzleloader hunters may still take an antlerless deer statewide during flintlock season; muzzleloading stamps must be purchased by July 31.

Contact the region office in your area for information on hunter-ed classes.

April 22 brings celebration of earth

More than 20 years ago, the first Earth Day was established to make people more aware of the problems facing our planet. The following environmental living tips were excerpted from a Department of Environmental Resources fact sheet.

Use fertilizer and pesticides sparingly.

Rain carries these substances to nearby streams and rivers. Investigate natural lawn care and gardening techniques.

Prevent soil erosion. Cover bare ground with grass, shrubs or trees to hold soil in place. Don't mow streambanks.

Keep your septic tank in working order.

Inspect it frequently and have it pumped out every three to five years.

Dispose of hazardous substances properly. Motor oil, paints, solvents and other chemicals should not be poured on the ground or down the drain.

Choose non-phosphate cleaning supplies.

Excess phosphates accelerate floating algae growth, blocking sunlight and depleting oxygen needed by aquatic animals and plants.

Wash cars on grass or gravel. This reduces runoff into storm sewers and naturally filters soap out of the water.

Conserve water. Turn off water when not being immediately used, and install water saving shower head and toilets. Repair leaks and drips immediately.

Recycle. Pennsylvania's recycling program will reduce our volume of solid waste by 25 percent. Newspapers, glass, aluminum, steel, plastic, cardboard, motor oil and vehicle batteries are all recyclable.

Be an environmental shopper. Buy products with minimal packaging. Take your own shopping bags to the market. Buy beverages in returnable or recyclable containers. Reuse bags, containers and foil as much as possible.

Conserve and use recycled paper. Try to use cloth instead of paper napkins; use cloth towels and rags instead of paper towels.

Use washable tableware. Use mugs, glasses and dishes rather than paper or foam cups and plates.

Start your own compost pile. Put grass clippings, leaves and vegetable waste in a compost heap.

Conserve electricity. Most of our electricity comes from power plants burn-

ing high-sulfur coal. If we use less energy, we burn less coal.

Use automobiles less. Whenever possible, use car pools, mass transit, walking or bicycling. Automobile exhaust contributes to smog, acid rain and global warming.

Plant trees. Evergreens slow winter winds and save heating costs; shade trees save cooling costs. All trees help clean the air and prevent erosion.

Use non-CFC products. Chlorofluorocarbons contribute to destruction of the ozone layer. Avoid home insulations containing CFCs, and cool with fans instead of air conditioners.

Provide wildlife habitat. Leave unmowed areas, build nest boxes, plant natural foods, and provide clean water and shelter areas around your home.

Keep plastics out of rivers and oceans. Discarded items such as fishing line, six-pack holders and trash bags entangle and choke animals. Other, smaller things can be mistaken for food items and kill animals. Dispose of trash properly.

Help prevent rainforest destruction. Try to avoid buying rainforest-cut lumber or furniture made from rainforest trees such as mahogany and teak. Also try to avoid buying rainforest-raised beef.

Don't buy captured animals. If you purchase exotic pets, make sure they're captive-bred.

Examine your lifestyle. Ask yourself if your choices and behavior help the environment or contribute to problems.

Become involved. Attend meetings, share your views and stay informed.

Support environmental education. Promote strong environmental education programs in your community's schools. Educate others on topics you know.

Enjoy and protect the natural world. Share nature with friends and family. Support organizations that help protect natural areas, and work for open space in your community.

Game Commission Sale Items

Books & Videos

Game Commission publications cover subjects from firearms and building nesting devices to animal lore and wild game cookery.

Quantity		Price
_____	<i>Shooter's Corner</i> , by Don Lewis	\$15.00
_____	<i>Birds of Pennsylvania</i> , by James & Lillian Wakeley	10.00
_____	<i>Pennsylvania Big Game Records, 1965-1986</i>	10.00
_____	<i>Mammals of Pennsylvania</i> , by J. Kenneth Douth, et al	4.00
_____	<i>Gone for the Day</i> , by Ned Smith	4.00
_____	<i>Wild Game Cookbook</i>	4.00
_____	<i>Woodlands & Wildlife</i>	4.00
_____	<i>Woodworking for Wildlife</i>	3.00
_____	<i>Ducks at a Distance</i>	1.00
_____	"On the Trail of Pennsylvania's Black Bears" video	29.95

Working Together for Wildlife

Proceeds from Working Together for Wildlife sales support nongame projects and research.

Art Prints — \$125

_____	1993 "Bear Run" by Bob Sopchick
_____	1992 "Spring Strut" by Taylor Oughton
_____	1991 "At The Den" by Laura Mark-Finberg
_____	1990 "Coming Home" by Gerald Putt
_____	1989 "Last Glance" by Jack Paluh
_____	1988 "Snowy Egret" by John Pritko
_____	1987 "Autumn Challenge" by Bob Sopchick
_____	1986 "Country Lane Kestrel" by Bob Sopchick

WTFW Patches — \$3

_____	1993 Black Bear
_____	1991 Red Fox
_____	1990 Bald Eagle
_____	1989 White-tailed Deer
_____	1988 Snowy Egret
_____	1987 Elk
_____	1986 Kestrel
_____	1985 Bobcat
_____	1984 Bluebird

Charts & Binders

Our popular bird and mammal charts illustrated by famed wildlife artist Ned Smith.

_____	Set No. 1 (birds — 4 charts) 20" x 30"	\$6
_____	Set No. 2 (birds & mammals — 4 charts) 20"x 30"	6
_____	Set No. 3 (all 8 charts) 11" x 14"	5
_____	GAME NEWS Binders	5

SPORT Items

Show your support for the Sportsmen Policing Our Ranks Together program.

_____	Bronze SPORT Tie-Tack/Lapel Pin	\$3.50
_____	SPORT Patch	1.00
_____	SPORT Hat (one size fits all)	4.00
_____	Turkey Alert Band	3.00

Waterfowl Management Stamps

Voluntary waterfowl management stamps provide vital funding for wetland acquisition and management. Each stamp is available for a three-year period only.

_____	1993 — Northern Shovelers by Glen Reichard	\$5.50
_____	1992 — Canada Goose by Bob Sopchick	5.50
_____	1991 — Wigeon by Gerald Putt	5.50

Miscellaneous Patches

Help promote the Commission's wildlife conservation programs with these handsome patches.

_____	"We Need Wildlife" Cardinal	\$3
_____	Pymatuning Wildlife Management Area	2
_____	Middle Creek Wildlife Management Area	2

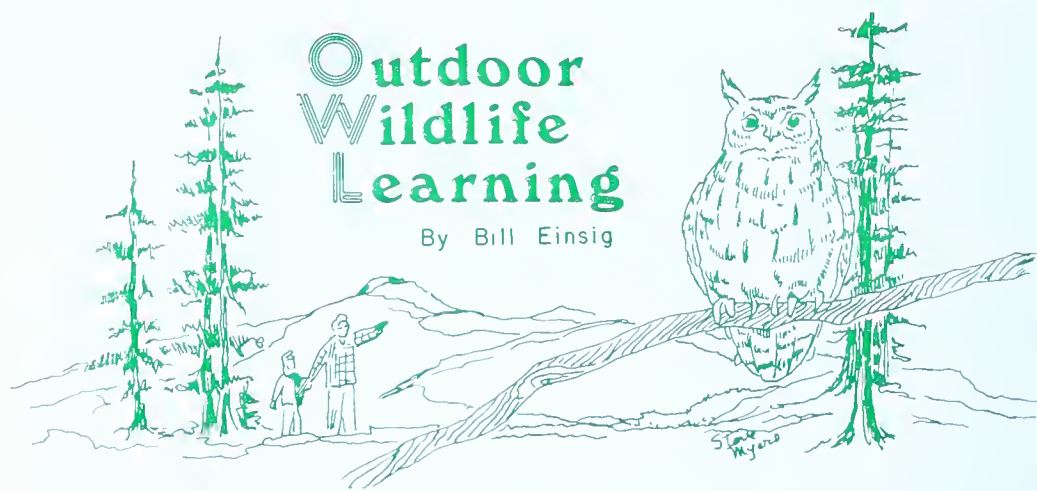
Mail orders along with remittance (do not send cash) to:

PA Game Commission
Dept. MS

2001 Elmerton Ave.

Harrisburg, PA 17110-9797

Checks should be made payable to Pennsylvania Game Commission. U.S. currency only.



Middle Creek is for Kids . . . and Geese

THINK of the word “Kodak” and you automatically think of “photography.” Think of “Winchester” and you think of “firearm” — maybe a particular one such as the famous Model 94. Now, think of the “Pennsylvania Game Commission” and you think naturally of “wildlife” or “hunting.” It’s normal to associate names or titles with descriptive attributes.

If you live anywhere near or within southeastern Pennsylvania and you hear “Middle Creek” you probably think of “geese,” “ducks” or “hunting.” Right? Not me. Mention Middle Creek and I instantly flash to “school field trip.”

I can’t remember ever visiting Middle Creek alone. I’ve been there with my family, with groups of teachers and, of course, with hundreds of school children. The Game Commission’s Middle Creek Wildlife Management Area was built for field trips.

Middle Creek has much to offer visiting school groups, and teachers can arrange a day of activities to cover a wide variety of lessons. The area’s educational facilities are impressive: a 400-acre lake, a smaller pond, wetlands, hardwoods, conifer stands, fields in various stages of succession, several excellent trails and lots of wildlife. But that’s just the outside.

Inside the visitors center is a fine collection of Pennsylvania wildlife mounts, environmental interpretive displays and a fully equipped auditorium.

There’s so much to see and do at Middle Creek that it’s impossible to cover everything in just one day. When it comes to scheduling field trips, I’ve made some hard choices over the years and, as a result, there are a few parts of Middle Creek I rarely visit simply because I don’t have enough time. Nonetheless, Middle Creek is an outstanding facility, and here’s an itinerary that works well for me.

10 a.m. — ARRIVAL AT MIDDLE CREEK VISITORS CENTER

Start the 1.4-mile Conservation Trail with your class. Brochures are available at the visitors center and they will point out a number of management practices along the trail. This is considered a 45-minute walk, but I rarely cover it in such a short time. There is too much to see and do.

Along this trail are some striking stone walls, and while I sometimes try to pass by them without comment — to save time — usually someone in the group asks about them and we’ll have to stop for a chat. Invariably, some student, young or old, will

tell me the walls are evidence that a battle had once been fought here. "After all, didn't we see lots of stone walls crisscrossing the Gettysburg Battlefield?" they often ask.

But if you look closely at the woods on each side of the wall, you'll see a subtle difference in the size and spacing of the trees. One side looks younger than the other. Years ago, one side was a field while the other may have been a woodlot. Even the youngest students soon imagine a farmer long ago stopping his plow to carry those rocks to the side of the field and stack them out of the way.

11 a.m. — RETURN TO VISITORS CENTER FROM CONSERVATION TRAIL

Inside, arrange students in small teams and have them look through the collection of wildlife mounts for answers to a series of problems posed on a printed worksheet. In the process, they must visit all areas of the center and examine each display in some detail. The worksheet was developed by two teachers from a local school district and is available to all interested teachers. (Write to OWL, care of *Game News*.)

Noon — LUNCH OUTSIDE OR IN THE SNACK AREA

Except for candy, soda, juice and snacks in vending machines, no food is available at Middle Creek. Visitors planning to spend the better part of a day should bring a lunch and drink in reusable containers. The old lunch boxes with built-in thermos were, and still are, great for reducing the volume of solid waste, and a field trip is a good time to teach that lesson.

12:30 p.m. — CATCH A MOVIE IN THE AUDITORIUM

The Game Commission's video "On the Trail of Pennsylvania's Black Bears" is available. Students will love it and so will adults. Some older favorites are still good, too. "Pennsylvania's Wildlife Marvels" has been around for a while, and it contains excellent footage of lots of many common wild animals.

One of my favorites is "Wood Duck World." This film traces a clutch of eight wood ducks through their first summer. Only

two of the young ducklings survive the trials of nature during those crucial months. For some students, this film may be their first realistic look at some of the interactions between animals and their environment.

1:15 p.m. — SELF-GUIDED TOUR

There are seven stops on this tour around the lake and through much of Middle Creek's controlled access area. At some stops, you can park and enjoy a panoramic view of the lake and its wildlife.

You're sure to see Canada geese, various ducks, tree swallows, bluebirds, pheasants and many other common birds your students will already know. Binoculars are helpful, so encourage students to bring their own.

The time spent on this tour obviously depends on the number of times you stop to look and talk. That's why I try to schedule this as the last activity. From this point, you can adjust your schedule to get back to school at a suitable time.

•
During the hunting seasons, parts of Middle Creek are closed. Some of the activities described here may not be available, depending on the timing of your visit. And, generally speaking, the visitors center is closed Dec. 1 through February. Contact Middle Creek well in advance of your trip to schedule your visit, the auditorium and the films you want to see. Be sure to ask for a list of the programs being offered by the staff.

No naturalist or environmental interpreter is available to accompany your group outside the visitors center, but there are materials to help get the most from your visit. Ask for them. It's best to visit Middle Creek on your own or with your family before any field trip, to give you a good idea of what's available and what's involved.

Middle Creek straddles the Lancaster/Lebanon County line, about a mile south of Kleinfeltersville. Another entrance is from Clay. From the intersection of Hopeland Road and Route 322 in northern Lancaster County, follow signs to the Middle Creek Wildlife Management Area.

For more information about the facility and what it has to offer write Middle Creek Wildlife Management Area, PO Box 110, Kleinfeltersville, PA 17039-0110.

The Shrew Untamed

BEGORRAH, but I have seen the little people." I have heard the patter of their tiny feet in the crisp fall leaves, listened to their piping squeals. I have seen their small dark eyes peer from under mossy log and rock, glimpsed their little forms darting from hiding place to hiding place. But it's not leprechauns I've been seeing, it's shrews.

While the leprechaun appears to a few, I'm the only one I know who sees so many shrews. I can hardly take a stand for bow season, sit on a stump with my squirrel gun, or lean against a log while deer hunting, but I see, and hear, the shrews.

I must have very good hearing, or at least I've cultivated that sense while hunting. It's my ears that first tell me shrews are about. The first time I saw a shrew, I was bowhunting in the Laurel Mountains. I'd found a log that had fallen against a tree, a comfortable place to wait while my companion tried to drive a deer to me.

It was a hushed afternoon, a precursor to rain. I gripped the bow handle, made sure the arrow was nocked, and did my best to sit with just my eyes moving. Then I heard that very small sound, a high-pitched "squeak, squeak, squeak" coming from somewhere in the rumpled leaves at my boot tips.

I brought my eyes down and, if a person can mentally swivel her ears, concentrated on the place from where the sound seemed to emanate. "Squeak, squeak," I heard again, but this time there was a motion. A tiny, dark shape jumped through the space between two leaves. What was that?

I followed the progress of the squeaks and the bump of a small body under the ground debris. Where the sound stopped, a sharp, twitching nose and pinpoint, beady eyes appeared from under an oak leaf. This was followed by the rest of a furry body, or at least what there was of it, a scant two inches long. I was looking at a creature the size of a bug but unmistakably a mammal, just a spoonful of warm-blooded life.



HUNTING close to the ground — "the Land of the Little People" — is no doubt the best if not only way of discovering and learning more about shrews.

I knew immediately what it had to be, which was a good thing. The shrew instantly dived for cover again and carried its thin squeaking away under a rotted log. I didn't know what sort of shrew it was, and I learned later how difficult it is even for experts to make an identification unless they have the skull to examine.

Pennsylvania's shrews are all very similar, except for size and subtle color shadings. Not much is known about the life history of shrews, and seeing one in the fur, so active, so small, so shy, I could understand why.

Although I had been dimly aware that

Another View...

by Linda Steiner

there were shrews in the Pennsylvania woods, I never realized how much verve and energy could be packed into such a small bundle. I sent for the Game Commission's "Wildlife Note" on shrews and guessed the animal I saw near Linn Run Park was a masked shrew, although it may have been something rarer. I'll never know.

Like the "little people," shrews always reveal themselves when they're not expected, here and gone. I'm left wondering if I really saw them or if it was all imagination.

As a hunter, I find myself sitting close to the ground, in shrew country, in the hungriest season for the animals. Because shrews are such fast-burning little furnaces, they constantly prowl for food. Shrews are the tigers of their miniature world, hungry predators pouncing on earthworms, insects, slugs, snails, spiders and such.

Small, Happy Gift

I often see shrews in deer season. I hear them squeaking under the snow and, following with my ears, spot them when they pop up in the melted space around a tree trunk. They sniff and blink, and duck back under snow cover again. On an otherwise uneventful hunting day, that glimpse is a small, happy gift from the wild.

One time, I paused at the edge of an old rock foundation to wait for buck hunting companions. The stonework was split by frost and had fallen into the pit in places, but most was intact. The pit itself had become filled over the years with tree limbs and leaf debris. The forest's work of refilling the hole was well underway.

Into my musings jumped a shrew — no, two shrews, no, four! Four plump, slatey gray shrews tumbled out of a corner crack in the walls, following one after the other like eager children enroute to a playground. And that's just the way they acted, running, rolling, chasing round and round, in and out of the rocks and limbs and leaves in the pit.

Then my hunting friends approached and the shrews disappeared, as if shy with strangers. When my companions peered

into the stone foundation, it was still and empty. They could scarcely believe my tale of cavorting shrews and looked at me as if I'd seen fairies.

Now I keep most of my shrew sightings to myself, enjoying privately these occasional peeks into an almost fanciful world. Shrews live in a place where toadstools are trees, pebbles are boulders, and a cold trickle a raging waterfall.

We can really appreciate the shrew's world only by lying belly-down on the ground and seeing spaces under the leaves as dark tunnels, imagining the branching lichens and bristly moss as waist high brush. The same perspective is true for passing beetles as well, but insects are too alien. Because the shrew is a mammal like us, we can wonder what it would be like to be that small.

Last fall, I found the ultimate spot for watching the small things of the forest. A huge beech lay prone across a trail, toppled by a storm, but it had borne nuts before the fall. Some nuts still clung to the twigs, some had scattered, so the ground around the downed tree was a waiting feast.

I sat quietly on the beech's big trunk, cradling my shotgun in my lap. Soon I heard familiar squeaking and rustling. I saw the tiny shrew zip through gaps between leaf clumps at my feet, or watched moving debris mark its progress.

On the other side of the tree, I heard the same sound. I turned to locate the second shrew and saw its furred form dive under the leaves like a porpoise going back beneath the sea.

Two shrews, a good sighting. But the old beech was a mecca for lilliputians. A mouse, looking outlandishly large after the shrews, popped up among the beech limbs and crunched a few nuts. A vole poked its nose above ground, posing briefly in the sunlight. A chipmunk scolded me from a nearby stump, a red squirrel chattered from the hemlock tree overhead, and the shrews squeaked once more.

It's not like watching a band of white-tail bucks, not the same as seeing a big boar bear or a flock of strutting gobblers, but I for one don't need to see big animals to have a good day afield.

"Circumstances are beyond the control of man; but his conduct is in his power."

—Benjamin Disraeli,
"Contarini Fleming"

INVESTIGATIONS that begin as hopeless causes but conclude successfully due to determination are well remembered. But when an officer spends many days or even weeks investigating a case and comes up short, a feeling of despair can subtly steal through him.

Officers who learn from such cases continue to be productive; those who don't, often get discouraged and bitter. If, in the end, they stop caring, they become another casualty of the outlaw.

Although nearly 17 years have passed, I still clearly recall two Montgomery County cases that took months to conclude. Both concerned deer poaching and involved some rather unusual circumstances.

During the buck season of 1976, I received word that a man suspected of killing a doe in Schuylkill County might be headed my way. Witnesses reported seeing him drag the deer out of the woods and put it in his car. I learned from my region office that the suspect's car was registered in Philadelphia. We suspected the poacher was on his way home, which gave me less than two hours to intercept him.

I telephoned Deputy Al Lange and met him in Philadelphia. It was mid-afternoon, and we planned to wait near the suspect's house.

Hours passed drearily. By midnight no one had showed, so I terminated the surveillance and asked Deputy Lange to check the house the following morning.

Although we didn't know it at the time, our suspect, Junior Roosevelt, had spent the night in a Schuylkill County motel. Later that next afternoon, however, his vehicle was parked in front of his house. We still had a slim chance, I thought, so I called Deputy Harry Scuron with a plan.

I instructed Harry to take his unmarked vehicle and park near

LOOKING BACK



By William Wasserman
Wildlife Conservation Officer
Wyoming County

Roosevelt's house and then radio me. Within a short period, I assured him, our suspect would be out to check his car. When he did, Harry was to see if Junior removed any signs of a deer.

Once Harry was in position, I telephoned Junior. I told him I had information he had unlawfully killed a deer, and asked if I could take a look at his vehicle.

"Come on and look. I got nothing to hide," he said in a tone that sounded cheerful but forced.

"Okay, I'll see you in 10 minutes," I replied.

"That soon?"

"Sure. Is that okay?"

"No problem, I just thought you were calling from out of town. Like I told you, I got nothing to hide."

"Okay, see you soon," I assured him.

After I hung up, Junior dashed out his front door and opened his car trunk. Deputy Scuron was there waiting but didn't find any sign that a deer had been in the vehicle. Then, in a surprising display of confidence, Junior

invited Scuron inside to search his house. Harry accepted the offer but found nothing there, either.

Evidently, Junior had opened his trunk to make sure no deer hair or blood remained inside — not to remove a deer as we expected. Also, we learned later, he knew we wouldn't find anything in his house. But at the time I was beginning to think Mr. Roosevelt had passed his course in Poaching 101 with honors.

Ten weeks passed and Roosevelt's case was collecting a lot of dust, but then I received a call from a confidential informant. He knew about Junior's hunting trip. He told me Junior had killed a doe, just as we suspected, and that he split the venison with three men hunting with him. The informant gave me the names and addresses of the men but refused to testify in court.

Learning the names and addresses of Junior's hunting companions was a major break. That evening I telephoned Junior and explained that an eyewitness had given me additional information about the case and — stretching the truth a bit — I said the witness was willing to testify in court.

"Wh-wh-what witness? I didn't kill any deer," he stammered.

"I'm also filing charges against the three men you split the deer meat with," I said, spitting out their names in rapid fire.

"They didn't do anything, man. Why are you charging them?"

"Because you gave them some of the meat, and that puts them in possession of an unlawfully killed deer."

A long drawn-out sigh was followed by an eternity of silence. Junior was slowly coming unraveled. I could almost hear the frantic whisperings as a thousand lies raced through his mind.

Finally he spoke, as if in a trance. "Wait a minute, man . . ." And, in a voice edged with pain, "I don't want my friends to get in trouble . . ."

"They already are," I interrupted.

"But I killed the deer. They were just doing what I told them. Can't you keep

them out of this? I'll take full responsibility."

"You're willing to plead guilty?"

"You got it, man. But, hey, keep this between us. If my boss hears about this I could lose my job. I'm a constable."

Within one week I had a full written statement from Junior, explaining how he had killed a doe and given all the meat to his three companions. Junior, it seems, didn't like venison. He pleaded guilty on a field acknowledgement of guilt and paid his fine in full. I never saw him again after that.

Four months later, in July, I learned of another deer case. It began with a phone call from a man named Shane McCain, a Montgomery County businessman. McCain had information about deer poaching and asked me to stop by his gift shop.

I drove out to meet him that afternoon as the sun blistered through an oppressive haze. Long lines of automobiles snaked wearily along, their hulking steel frames barely moving through clogged highways. After 45 minutes and what seemed an equal number of traffic lights, I finally arrived at McCain's.

Mr. McCain, a middle-aged man with red hair that fell wildly to his shoulders, stepped forward with a pronounced limp and, shaking my hand vigorously, told me one of his customers saw a deer hanging in a barn rented by one Imah Slobb. It looked like it had a bullet hole in its neck.

The customer had also found several clumps of hair by a maple tree near the back door of Slobb's house. McCain handed me an envelope stuffed with deer hair and said his customer wanted to remain anonymous.

I thanked Mr. McCain, and after getting directions, drove to Slobb's home. After following a long driveway around back, I parked, and as I approached the back door, I noticed deer hair on the ground at the base of a silver maple tree. It was summer hair, the same as the rust-color hair in the envelope.

No vehicles were around but I knocked on the door anyway, hoping Slobb was home. No one answered after several minutes, so I drove to the State Police Crime Lab in Bethlehem to have the deer hair analyzed.

A week later I received proof that the hair was from a deer. I wanted the crime lab report because I thought a district justice would be more inclined to issue a search warrant if I presented the report with my affidavit.

Late the following evening, deputies Herb Fritz, Ed Lays, Bob McConnell and I proceeded to Slobb's house with a warrant in hand.

No one was home when we arrived, so the four of us began looking through the barn and surrounding grounds. After searching for an hour and finding nothing, we headed for the house. Our warrant expired at 10 p.m., and although we would have preferred someone was home, we were running out of time.

Cautiously, I crawled through an unlocked window and slid slowly inside the darkness of Slobb's house. Once on my feet I groped around until I felt a light switch. I flicked it on and opened the door for my deputies. We searched freezers and other places Slobb might have deer parts, but we came up empty-handed. Discouraged, we left a copy of the warrant on Slobb's kitchen table, locked the door behind us and departed.

The following day I expected a hostile telephone call, but it never came. Three days passed and Slobb still hadn't called, so on July 23, with assistance from Deputy Waterways Patrolman Bob McConnell, I went to see him.

No one was home when we arrived, although a pickup was parked in the driveway. We could see some hair and a faint bloodstain in the bed of the truck, and we suspected they were from a deer. There was nothing else we could do, so I wedged one of my business cards into Slobb's front door and left.



Question

May I use a rifle for deer hunting in the Southeast Special Regulations Area?

Answer

No. For deer hunting, only muzzleloading long guns and shotguns 20-gauge or larger are permitted in that region.

Ten days later, having heard nothing from Slobb, Deputy McConnell and I drove to his house once again. This time we were surprised to find him sitting on his back porch.

Slobb was a thick-set man in his late 20s with short blonde hair and a neatly trimmed beard. He was relaxed and composed when we confronted him, as if he had been expecting us.

I identified myself and Officer McConnell. I told him we knew about the deer and that we had a witness who was willing to testify against him in court. (Okay, I stretched the truth again.)

"What witness?" Slobb asked innocently. "Nobody saw me shoot a deer. Who's this witness you're talking about?"

"I can't tell you that. Not yet, anyway. Do you know what a field acknowledgement of guilt is?"

"No."

"It's a legal document people may use when they break the Game Law. By signing a field acknowledgement of guilt and paying the fine directly to the Game Commission, the violator doesn't have any court costs."

Slobb said nothing, he simply sat staring at me. I went on. "I'm filing charges against you for killing a deer in closed season. You can have a hearing

or settle on a field acknowledgement. It's your choice."

Slobb's face was expressionless. "I don't think you can prove anything," he said.

"Then I guess you want a hearing," I replied.

"Not really," Slobb said dryly.

"Well, you think about it," I said.

"I'll hold the paperwork for a few days. Call me."

I handed him my card before we left. Slobb had killed a deer and knew I knew it, but he suspected I was bluffing about the witness. When two weeks passed and I didn't hear from him, I thought it was over.

Slobb was a difficult man. He wouldn't confess unless I put more pressure on him, so I had to come up with a way. I knew Slobb was renting his home, and I wondered if his landlord might object to poaching on his land. It was a long shot, but I telephoned his landlord and explained everything to him.

That evening, two months after the investigation began, Slobb called and said he wanted to settle on a field acknowledgement of guilt. We met the following day.

Slobb said he wanted to get everything off his chest. He told me a 5-point buck had been eating the corn he planted behind his house, so one evening he shot the deer in the neck with a revolver. Most of the venison went to his two German shepherds, but he kept a small portion for himself. I believed his story and was glad the case had finally come to an end.



"We Need Wildlife" is a message more people need to realize and appreciate if the future of our wildlife resources is to be ensured. To help promote that theme, the Game Commission has produced a new patch featuring a cardinal resting on a dogwood sprig. The 3-inch full color patch costs \$3 each, delivered, and may be ordered from the Pennsylvania Game Commission, Dept. MS, 2001 Elmerton Ave., Harrisburg, PA 17110-9797.

Over the years I've investigated hundreds of cases and most were closed within a few days. The longer an investigation drags on, the more difficult it becomes: Witnesses forget details; evidence becomes stale or misplaced; and other cases begin to take precedence.

Had it not been for some unusual circumstances and a lot of persistence (along with some invaluable assistance), both the Roosevelt and Slobb cases would have gone unsolved.

Cover painting by Ken Hunter

The osprey represents a modern day wildlife management success story. Ten years ago not one osprey nest could be found in Pennsylvania. The bird, also known as the fish hawk, was the victim of DDT and other pesticides, just as eagles, peregrine falcons and other birds of prey were. Today, however, thanks to hacking projects conducted at various locations across the state, ospreys once again can be counted among Pennsylvania's breeding birds. Last year nine osprey nests were found in the Poconos, three along the Susquehanna River and one on SGL 111 in Somerset County.

Year of the Raccoons

FOR 19 years my contacts with raccoons were fleeting glimpses at dusk. But during the drought of 1991 our small mountain stream served as a magnet for raccoons, and they did not stick to their usual nocturnal schedule and had little fear of humans.

My “year of the raccoons,” as I later called it, began in early July. I was out on my morning walk, choosing, that overcast, gray drizzly day, to hike down our hollow road beside our small stream. Surrounded on all sides by woodlands that have not been cut for many decades, our primitive road is the only opening along the stream’s mile and a half descent to the valley.

Trees of all shapes and sizes have been left to fall and molder according to nature’s timetable, so den trees are abundant. One of the most picturesque is the remains of an enormous, broken-off oak that stands as a 15-foot sentinel beside the stream.

But that summer day something new had been added — a pile of sleeping raccoons lay draped over its top like a fur stole. As I stood on the road, trying to sort out their numbers, a deer snorted nearby, instantly alerting the snoozers. What had looked like two adults broke into four small raccoons that clambered down into the hollow snag, reacting not to me but to the deer’s warning.

After a couple minutes two of the raccoons returned. One immediately settled

down, its back to me, and resumed its nap. The other watched me intently for a minute or two and then partly retreated into the snag. Almost immediately it was pushed out again by the other two raccoons, one of which also looked me over thoroughly before all three turned their backs and joined the other in a nap.

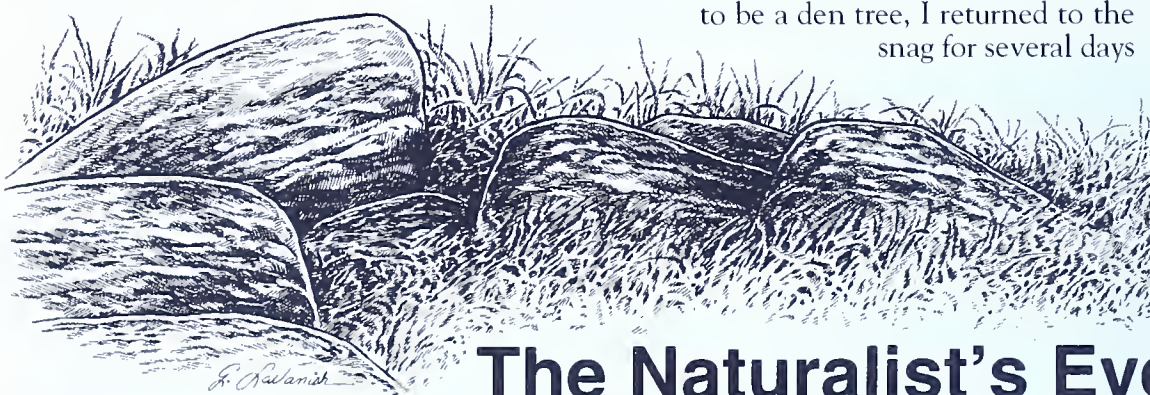
I eased to within a mere 20 feet from the snag, determined to share a little time with the less than half-grown and trusting raccoons, beguiled, as many people have been, by their endearing face masks. Occasionally an ear twitched as they slumbered on. After a short wait, one youngster awoke and looked intently at me for several minutes before again settling back down. This gave me a chance to swat the hoard of mosquitoes buzzing around my face.

More silent minutes passed before that same cautious raccoon again roused up and climbed back down into the den while the others still slept. I stood to stretch my cramped legs and quietly examined the snag from every angle; the raccoons never moved. I then proceeded on my walk, returning nearly two hours later just as a thunderstorm approached.

Two raccoons were still sleeping outside, but as I walked past they awoke and looked at me. I talked quietly to them and they seemed to listen before slowly moving back down into the den just as the storm broke.

Excited about finding what appeared to be a den tree, I returned to the snag for several days

By Marcia Bonta



The Naturalist's Eye

but never saw or heard another raccoon there. Later I learned that raccoon families move out of a den tree when the youngsters are between six and nine weeks old. Apparently I had discovered them just before moving day.

By early September our stream had been reduced to occasional puddles in its upper reaches and a barely discernible trickle halfway down the hollow. But the water served as a magnet for wildlife, a magnet that also pulled me down day after brilliant day in search of migrating birds and thirsty mammals.

One morning, as I stood quietly on the road, an adult raccoon wandered past in the streambed below, lifting rocks and feeling underneath for food with its sensitive, fluttery paws. It didn't seem to notice me, so staying on the road I followed its upstream progress for about 100 feet until it spotted my movement. I froze as it turned to look me over.

In the midst of its silent scrutiny, an owl-like "ooo-ooo" came from downstream. The raccoon spun around and headed toward the sound, all the while keeping a wary eye on my motionless form. A few feet below where I first saw it, another, smaller raccoon was foraging. I assumed it was the remaining offspring of its mother, the larger raccoon, as young are still traveling and learning from their mothers in the early autumn.

For several minutes they turned over rocks together while I watched. Then they clambered up the streambank nearest me to nose in the underbrush. After returning to the streambed and before settling back down to resume their foraging, each reared up on its haunches to look me over. Apparently satisfied that I was harmless, they continued their search for food; I could even hear quiet gruntings between them as they worked.

Finally, the mother grunted more em-

phatically and headed up the mountainside. The youngster dawdled along a few hundred feet behind and over to the right from her, seemingly like a small child not altogether willing to do exactly as its parent wants it to do. Eventually they both meandered out of sight.

Although it was tempting to link the den sighting with what I had just witnessed, the sightings had occurred almost half a mile apart, and in Pennsylvania a raccoon needs only two acres when the habitat is good.

It was also difficult to believe that that single youngster was the sole survivor of the four pups. But I had no way of knowing how plentiful food was for raccoons during the

drought. I knew they had eaten nothing while I watched them. The fact that they were foraging in bright daylight also seemed suspicious. Had their hunger driven them to abandon their nocturnal habits and ignore potential predators?

Three months later a happier solution presented itself. On an abnormally warm December day I again elected to walk down the road. Just after passing the remains of our old corral, I noticed pieces of bark raining down. I looked up into a large tree to the right of the road and spotted an adult raccoon about 50 feet above me. It saw me at the same time, turned around on the branch and hissed.

Tumbling to Earth

Then, trying to get down the tree as fast and in any way it could, it tumbled earthward from branch to branch. When it ran out of branches, it scrambled down the tree trunk like a bear, spread-eagle at one point in what appeared to be a desperate attempt to hold on.

Finally it regained its balance and plunged head first down the tree trunk, free-falling the last 15 feet to the ground and rolling over. I fully expected it to be



hurt, but the raccoon sat up immediately and tried to clean itself, never once looking in my direction. Had it already forgotten its fright?

As I watched, that portly teddy-bear of a raccoon waddled nonchalantly across the road and down into the stream. It was about 50 feet upstream from the old den tree I had found the previous summer. After drinking deeply, the raccoon climbed back on the bank, sat down on its haunches and proceeded to thoroughly lick its belly and back legs. After several minutes, it started slowly upstream, pausing several more times to clean itself, while I followed along on the road slightly above and behind it.

Like a Clown

At last it trundled up our guest house bank and sniffed along the house foundations until it reached the front porch. First it tried to get under the porch by squeezing past the downspout and a swinging wire, falling on its back like a clown each time the wire smacked it. By this time I thought of that raccoon as a comedian with a short-term memory, but it eventually managed to squeeze its rotund body under the lattice work protecting the furnace beneath the guesthouse porch.

Our son Steve, who had been living in the guesthouse, had been complaining about animal noises disrupting his sleep. Seeing that raccoon convinced me that it and others were communally spending the winter there, a technique the non-hibernating raccoons use to stay warm. Up to 23 individuals have been reported in a single den, so I hoped that the guesthouse den held at least the two mothers and five offspring I had previously watched.

By then the drought had officially ended and so, I thought, had my glimpses into raccoon domestic life. I knew that in January and February the males roam in search of suitable females, and that after mating a male might stay with his mate during her 63-day gestation period. Some even help care for the pups.

But in early spring I saw only woodchucks emerging from beneath the guesthouse, so I assumed the raccoons had



dispersed before taking up new domestic chores.

Spring came late last year, but on an overcast April afternoon I went walking in search of new bird arrivals. The previous day, despite cold showers, the first shadbush had bloomed and our yard was filled with singing birds — migrating ruby-crowned kinglets, a couple of newly returned blue-gray gnatcatchers, and three displaying common flickers.

Sounds of Spring

The first female rufous-sided towhee scratched in the woods along Laurel Ridge Trail, and below the Far Field Road both a white-throated sparrow and a towhee sang.

All those songs were familiar and welcome sounds of spring.

But as I headed back along the Far Field Trail, I heard loud "churring" noises emanating from the trees. I scanned the still-naked tree branches but couldn't see any birds. Still the sound continued, so I sat down and tried to pinpoint the source. For several minutes it was silent. Then the churring resumed.

It seemed to be coming from inside a broken-off black locust tree with a small hole 15 feet from the ground. Certain I had discovered some sort of owl's nest, I focused my binoculars on the nest hole. It was then that I glimpsed a banded tail moving past the opening just as a paw with an opposable thumb emerged from the hole.

Another raccoon den. This time, though, the mother was at home and, as my husband and I discovered later when

we climbed a ladder to look in, she was nursing newborn pups already masked and covered with hair. Although their eyes were still tightly shut, they moved agilely over their mother's chest and belly. One even turned around and dangled its banded tail out of the nest hole.

Accepted

The mother accepted our presence calmly. Not once did she make a threatening noise or gesture. Instead, she ignored us and continued to nurse even when my husband took several closeup flash pictures.

By then it was raining hard, so protecting ourselves and our camera equipment as best we could, we hurried home. But that discovery seemed to bring my raccoon sightings full circle and my year of the raccoons to an end. These days I am back to only glimpses near dusk.

Fun Games

Name that Plant

By Connie Mertz

Identify this plant species from the clues below.

I am an aquatic plant and many of my species group together in shallow water. My green shoots are food for geese, muskrats, and even elk in early spring. Redwing blackbirds and other birds like to nest in my tall stalks.

I am a wild edible. My young green spikes can be cooked as a vegetable and eaten like corn on the cob. The Russians call this long, tender part of my spike "Cossack asparagus" and relish its taste. My bright yellow pollen is gathered and used like flour in making pancakes and breads.

I have brown fuzzy heads that are often gathered for flower arrangements in the fall. When my head turns to fluffy down, I can be used to stuff mattresses or practically anything. My long basal leaves were often dried and used to make chair seats.

I provided a toy for many a child. Long ago, my uniform stems constructed many miniature log cabins and forts.

I am the common _____

answer on p. 64

Counting the Costs

By Keith C. Schuyler

WHEN IT COMES to taking up archery, the cost of a bow and arrows is all that a person really needs to consider. Yet even though that expenditure can be considerable, most of us don't settle for just the bare essentials, but continually add accessory items to improve or at least make our shooting more enjoyable.

So, depending upon the level of sophistication to which a person aspires, the cost of archery can go up and up and up.

For starters, the cost of a bow — longbow, recurve or compound — will run from somewhere around \$150 to more than \$600. And if you're one of those who wants one bow for target shooting and another for hunting, figure accordingly.

Arrow shafts vary from about 50 cents each for plain cedar shafts to considerably more for Port Orford. Aluminum runs from about \$17 to \$45 a dozen; some contain inserts. Carbon shafts range from \$54 to \$103 a dozen. These prices are from discount houses, and in most instances represent only the cost of the shaft.

Read the fine print on mail orders or ask the salesperson if there is an extra charge for cutting shafts to a desired length, and for including and/or installing inserts, adapters, nocks and fletching.

Every arrow, of course, must have a head, but these costs aren't too bad. Target and field heads are only \$2.95 to \$8.95 a dozen. Hunting broadheads, however, list for \$2.50 to \$5.58 — *each*.

Most archers will want a quiver for those expensive arrows, and broadheads are much too dangerous to carry while hunting without the heads covered. An acceptable quiver goes for about \$12; one that holds nine arrows (twice what's needed on an average hunt) costs \$28. An average price of 23 brands I checked came to \$16.48.

For those who prefer a hip quiver for hunting, there's a model that sells for \$39.



TO BECOME involved in archery, a person can get by with the just the basics. But as one's interests grow, so do expenditures. Today, a hunter can expect to spend several hundred dollars to take up the sport.

Most archers who hunt with a traditional longbow or a recurve opt for a back quiver. Those run from \$33 to \$93.

Now let's add it all up, using the average prices of these essentials: \$375 for a bow (a



compound); \$55 for a dozen arrows; \$5.54 for a dozen target or field heads; \$48.48 for a dozen broadheads; and \$16.98 for a bow quiver. The total, including a 6 percent sales tax, comes to \$530.03.

The traditional bowhunter may pay more for a back quiver, but the bow and arrows generally cost less. However, top of the line recurves and longbows both hover around \$200.

Valuable Equipment

Maybe you bought a less expensive or a secondhand bow, or took some other shortcut. But then again, maybe you spent more. Regardless, if you're an archery hunter, you're carrying equipment valued at somewhere around the total just noted.

You still don't have a bow sight, which costs anywhere from \$12 to \$109. And perhaps you go for an overdraw (\$11.50 to \$95) or an arrow rest (\$1.50 to \$75). Or consider these other accessories: kisser button, cushion plunger, string silencers, clicker, wrist sling, stabilizer(s), arm guard, shooting tabs or glove, game calls, game scents, arrow holder, string wax, camouflage makeup, head net, fanny pack, knife, cable stops, drag rope and more. And don't forget annual club dues (about \$15).

For those so inclined, there is the matter of a release. I know of at least 57 different string releases; prices range from \$9.90 to \$82 and average \$30.

What about camouflage? Here it gets a bit sticky. A person can buy a lightweight suit or coveralls big enough to add extra layers underneath for winter comfort — as I do — or he can spend top dollar for an all-wool Woolrich camo suit. Some companies advertise jacket and trousers separately.

A mottled green, brown, black and tan Safe-T-Bak suit has served me for years in the regular bowhunting seasons. You might decide that a camo

jacket worn with jeans is enough to suit your needs.

Whatever you buy, count on spending from \$60 to more than \$200 for a garment, or garments, with sufficient camouflage and enough pockets to suit your needs.

For the November bow season, archers are required to wear 250 square inches of fluorescent orange on the head, chest and back. A camo hat and suit that includes fluorescent orange will pass legal inspection as long as the orange portion adds up to the requirement. If you also hunt outside Pennsylvania, be advised that some states permit only solid fluorescent orange. Then, for about \$15, you can get soap to throw into the washing machine that will make your hunting clothes scent proof.

One break you get is for a hat. You can spend from \$6 to \$11 for one to match your outfit, or you can wear one of the countless free caps used as an advertising media by commercial houses and organizations. Just be sure that the cap bill clears your bowstring when at full draw.

You should also have a good pair of waterproof, warm, sturdy, boots. Aside from your bow and arrows, this is the most important part of your equipment. Sure, if you have strong ankles you can wear the same loafers or sneakers you wear on the indoor shooting range. But for any sort of serious hunting, plan on spending \$60 to \$120 on a good pair of boots. And by all means, make sure that they fit properly.

Now you're fully equipped for archery hunting and dressed for the part. You look

THE SAME scale handloaders use to weigh powder charges, left, is fine for weighing arrowheads, too.



right; you even smell right. And if you planned it right, you may have enough money left for a tank of gas.

Of course, those who prefer an aerial view will pay a pretty penny for a good tree stand. If you're so inclined, don't trust your life to less than one you can handle with confidence.

One catalog offers a choice of 42. For the less agile, there are at least 10 ladders of various types to accomplish the same purpose. None are foolproof. You can spend up to \$200 for a tree stand, depending upon how high you want to go. By all means, add a safety strap or harness.

Shop-Type Equipment

Every archer has the ongoing expenditures for replacement arrows, bow strings, cables and so forth. Some archers have a professional who handles setups and repairs, but many clubs with indoor facilities save their members these expenses by providing compound bow repair and set-up equipment.

Other equipment a bit expensive for an individual is worth the investment by a group. For example, traditional archers can use a spine machine to help cull wooden shafts, segregating those with similar bending characteristics to get a matched set.



A chronograph (which measures velocity in feet per second) provides important information about how various arrow shafts, fletching and heads affect arrow performance. It eliminates guesswork while determining consistency in release. One, the Crony portable chronograph, can be purchased (with carrying case) for about \$100. Most, if not all, chronographs can be mounted on a camera tripod.

A handy rack to hold large paper sheets for testing arrow trajectories is made by Romeu. It costs \$42.

Another item, almost a necessity for compound bow archers, is a bow press. Trying to change cables, pulleys and other parts of a compound bow is next to impossible without one. It makes changing strings a snap, although a portable gadget such as Game Tracker Lapper (\$21) will do the job.

Bow presses don't come cheap. A North American Mfg. Compound Pro Press of welded steel construction costs about \$190; a Lancaster Archery Full Adjustment Press of aircraft aluminum and steel goes for around \$270.

For those who use aluminum shafts, an arrow straightener pays for itself in a reasonable amount of time. Three models, ranging from \$60 to \$119, have dials to indicate any deviation at any part of the shaft. I've been using a Lancaster straightener for years with good results (\$92.50).

Those who like to build their own arrows from shaft to finished product need to have fletching jigs, which vary from top of the line Bitzenburger, at \$60 each, down to a pocket kit by Bohning for \$5.25. To accompany the jig or jigs, the arrow maker needs a shaft cutter. A hand-held Bell-Key H.D. goes for \$30, or a person can opt for an electric Horizon Saw for \$92.

Scales are important to archers. Although most archery manufacturers hold close quality control, the difference of a few grams (1/28th ounce or 15.43 grains)

ANOTHER TOOL an archer or, more likely, a club might consider is a metal detector, used here by Dave Ruckle. One of these sensitive devices can be invaluable when it comes to locating lost arrows and other equipment.

in the weight of fletchings, heads and adapters can be important to professional target shooters. A scale like those used by firearm handloaders for weighing bullets and powders will suit the discriminating archer as well.

A scale for measuring draw weights is another useful tool. When combined with a measuring stick, a person can determine weights at any interval from beginning to end of draw. Two types are available. Hanson makes a regular hanging scale that indicates weights up to 100 pounds; a hand-held scale from Cardoza weighs up to 85 pounds. Each sells for around \$30.

As an aside, speaking of scales, I've often thought that during deer season a club or even an individual could run a small business by weighing animals taken by hunters.

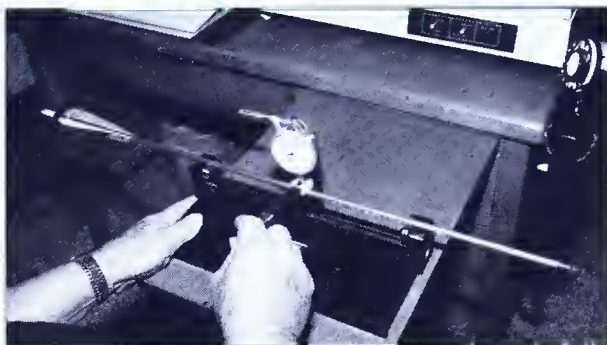
Most hunters are curious about such weights, and it would eliminate these newspaper guesstimates that rarely report deer under 140 pounds. It takes a big deer to beat the average true, field-dressed weight of 110 to 130 pounds — and that's for a buck. By charging a dollar or two, the scale would soon pay for itself.

One more handy gadget is a metal detector. With this sensitive instrument, an archer can locate errant arrows that escape under sod around backyard targets or on club shooting ranges. Recently, David Ruckle found an aluminum arrow (along with an assortment of nuts and bolts) in my yard that had evaded all attempts to find it over at least four years.

Finally, a collection of archery books and videos can be a helpful and money-saving addition for club members. There are some fine ones on both target shooting and bowhunting. Any club acquiring any



A BASIC fletching tool, above, is handy for making on-site repairs or for completely building an arrow. A straightener, below, can save a lot of arrows for shooting again another day.



or all of these tools and accessories may find it wise to name a quartermaster/librarian to keep track of any equipment that leaves the premises.

All the prices I mentioned here, although they vary among sources, were accurate to the nearest dollar at the time this was written. They are not guaranteed now or in the future.

Regardless of how costly semi-primitive archery equipment seemed to archers just a few decades ago, today's well-equipped bowman is paying a considerable price to participate.

Commission 800 Numbers

Within Pennsylvania, use the agency's toll-free 800 numbers to contact a wildlife conservation officer. For the Northwest Region, call (800) 533-6764; Southwest, (800) 243-8519; Northcentral, (800) 422-7551; Southcentral, (800) 422-7554; Northeast, (800) 228-0789; and Southeast (800) 228-0791. Phones will be manned around the clock during the major hunting seasons, and about 15 hours a day at other times.



DAVE BRESNHAN, Butler, looks pleased at the one-hole group fired by Helen's new 6mm BR Jim Peightal built for her. Although not a benchrest rig, the gun/cartridge combination is capable of mighty fine accuracy.

A Custom 6mm BR

By Don Lewis

Photos by Helen Lewis

“WHAT CALIBER was that benchrest rifle I fired on Lincoln Longstaff's 50-yard range?” asked Helen. “I was shooting well that day. If I recall, I came close to firing a 5-shot one-holer. I think my first shot landed a half bullet hole high, but the other four cut one tiny hole.”

“Longstaff's bench rifle is a 6mm PPC, a popular benchrest cartridge — and for good reason; it's one of the most accurate.”

“How would it be for woodchuck hunting? There wasn't any recoil to speak of, or ear-shattering muzzle blast.”

I told Helen to keep in mind the rifle she'd shot weighed around 10 pounds. However, the small, squatty 6mm PPC cartridge doesn't produce much recoil, and

it doesn't seem to have the muzzle blast of something along the lines of a .220 Swift. Although it's not a long range cartridge such as the Swift or .243, up to 250 yards it's in a class by itself in woodchuck country, and on the range it will cut one-holers with ease at 100 yards.

“That sounds good to me,” she said. “I like to shoot groups on a range, and if it's



ON THE RANGE, Helen found her new 6mm BR to be everything she'd expected. Chronographing results indicated a muzzle velocity of 3,140, which puts the cartridge in the same class as a .222 Rem.

tops on the benchrest line it should be just as accurate in the field. Why don't you and Jim Peightal get started on one?"

That was easy for Helen to say. The weather outside was just touching 5 above zero, and building a woodchuck rifle was hardly the primary thought of the day. After thinking about it for a short time, though, I called Jim for suggestions on components.

First I asked him what action he would suggest, since the 6mm PPC has a smaller rim diameter than cartridges such as the .30-06, .270 and 6mm Rem. I told him, too, to keep in mind that I was thinking in terms of a precision varmint rifle, not a benchrest outfit.

The 6mm PPC, he explained, is a spin-off of the .220 Russian and has a rim diameter .028 inch smaller than that of the 6mm Rem., .270 and .243. That meant I would have to use an action with a small bolt face, something on the order of a .222 or .223.

Jim said he could open one of those and install a Sako-type extractor. Otherwise, with something like a .30-06, he'd have to silver-solder an insert in the bolt face and cut a slot for the extractor — a time-consuming job that requires a lot of machine work.

I thought that aspect alone would postpone the project for awhile because I didn't have a small bolt face outfit I wanted to disassemble. I'd hoped to make use of Helen's .308 Remington 700, which we had been using pretty much as a spare. It needed the stock shortened and a new recoil pad installed so she could shoot it properly.

When I explained that to Jim, though, he said we could use the .308 and chamber it for Remington's 6mm BR (Bench Rest). The .308 and 6mm BR are both short-



actions with identical rim head diameters. Because Helen wanted to use the gun on the range and in the field, Jim thought a No. 7 contour Douglas Premium barrel and a Six Enterprises fiberglass stock would complete the outfit. A fiberglass stock won't bend or warp, and the Hunter/Benchrest model he suggested has a wide, flat forearm that lends itself well to shooting off sandbags.

When I asked about weight, Jim pointed out that a few extra pounds would actually be a benefit. He told me not to worry about how much the rifle would weigh.

"Helen won't mind, either," I cut in. "I'm the one who will have to lug the monster. She just aims and pulls the trigger."

About 11 Pounds

Jim said he'd built several guns based on specs similar to the ones we'd outlined and, depending on the scope, most hit around 11 pounds.

I asked Jim about the 6mm BR and whether it was comparable to its PPC relative. Jim said the BR round is similar and in fact has a number of advantages. Its slightly larger powder capacity enables it to shoot heavier bullets better. Another plus is that it became a factory cartridge around 1988; brass is available over the counter and is less expensive than the PPC. Technically, the 6mm BR is based on the .308 x 1 1/2-inch case.

I ordered the stock I wanted from Lee Six of Six Enterprises in San Jose, CA, painted green per Helen's wishes. I also

had a recoil pad installed to make the stock length $13\frac{3}{8}$ inches from the face of the trigger to the end of the pad. This length is just right for Helen, on the range and in the pasture fields.

My friend Dick Dietz, who at the time headed public relations for Remington, sent me a few boxes of empty, unprimed brass.

Dick explained that I would have to drill the flash holes because Remington 6mm BR brass is not factory drilled. For some time, there has been a mild controversy over what size flash hole works best. Remington, therefore, decided to allow each shooter to drill for himself the diameter that best suits the ammo components he's using.

Worth Trying

For drilling a small primer flash hole, Peightal turned out a drilling jig that uses a No. 50 drill (.070). Normally, the small primer pocket flash hole is .082 in diameter (No. 45 drill). Peightal's jig sounded

pretty small, but he thought it was worth trying. We could always open the jig hole for a larger drill, he explained. While the actual size is subject to debate, it's undeniably important that flash hole size be uniform among all the cases.

When the stock arrived, Peightal happened to be working on a short-action Remington Model 700 with a No. 7 Douglas barrel chambered for the .22-250. This was a time-saver for us because he was able to use that barreled action to do our preliminary stock inletting. Douglas had informed me that it would be at least three weeks until they would be making 6mm barrels with a 1-in-12 twist.

Scope mounting was another obstacle we had to overcome. I wanted to put a Redfield 3-12x Ultimate Illuminator scope on the rifle. This scope has a 30mm tube and a 56mm objective lens, so I needed a high mount setup to give adequate clearance above the 6mm's heavy barrel.

Sid Haight, owner of S&K Manufacturing Co. in Pittsfield, solved the problem.

He supplied me with his 30mm high ring set and standard bases with 3/8-inch riser blocks. This would leave a gap of close to 3/16 inch between the objective lens and the barrel.

When the rifle was finally completed, I was loading .223 rounds for a prairie dog hunt. I was anxious to get on with the 6mm project, so I installed the proper dies and shell plates and cranked out a box of 6mm BR shells for testing.

Although I never intended this rifle to be a benchrest outfit, I planned on using benchrest bullets. Earlier tests with the 6mm 65-grain Cook BR bullet proved to me it was the right one for the new rig.

A 10-shot test through the chronograph, 12 feet from the muzzle, gave an instrumental velocity of 3,115 fps. Muzzle velocity would be approximately 3,140 fps, which puts this cartridge in the same class as a .222 Rem. with 55-grain bullets. I was convinced this round would be quite adequate for shots up to 250 yards.

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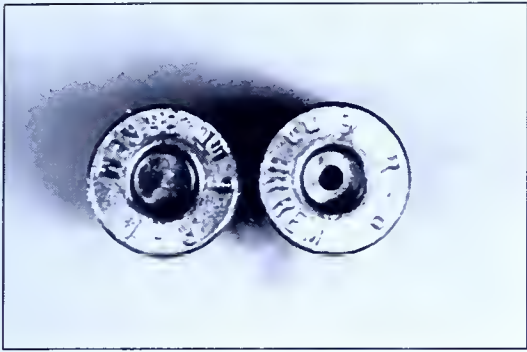
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REMINGTON doesn't drill flash holes in 6mm BR brass because of varying opinions of what the best size is. Lewis drilled a .070-inch flash hole for use in Helen's rifle. The standard diameter for a small flash hole is .082. As Peightal suggested, start off small because you can always make the holes larger.

have to wait until we could get out in the woodchuck fields.

In the meantime, though, we were all pleased when Helen fired a 3-shot cloverleaf group that just missed being completely covered by the head of a 6mm case. That's pretty tight grouping for a rifle quite a few steps from being a benchrest outfit. A half dozen subsequent 1/2- and 5/8-inch groups convinced Helen she had exactly what she had asked for.

Downright Thoughtful

Jim was right when he said Helen would forget that this outfit, with scope, weighs 11 1/2 pounds. In fact, she has already picked a field that will cut my carrying distance down to about 450 yards — uphill. Downright thoughtful of her, isn't it?

With custom 6mm BR outfits, cases need to be shortened before they will fit in the chamber. To avoid that, Jim lengthened the throat about .020. I realized accuracy might suffer, but it was a chance I was willing to take.

When I chambered the first live round there was just enough resistance to make me feel comfortable. When I then put three shots in one jagged hole at 100 yards, I was really relieved.

Several more 3-shot groups stayed under 5/8 inch, convincing me that Peightal's outfit would meet every accuracy requirement necessary for 250-yard field shooting. Final proof of that, however, would

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In the wind

j. scott rupp



The Aleutian Canada goose may soon return to its historic migration route between Russia and Japan. U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service loaned 10 pairs of Aleutians to Russia in hopes of restocking the population by means of a captive breeding program. The U.S. population, once endangered, numbers 8,000 birds today; the goose was almost extirpated from Asia decades ago, reports the Wildlife Management Institute.

Wyoming wildlife officials are continuing their bighorn sheep transplant program. Sixty-nine bighorns trapped at Whiskey Mountain were moved to Shell Canyon and the Wind River Indian Reservation; the transplanted animals will supplement existing herds. Sheep have been trapped at Whiskey Mountain for decades. The area has supplied more than 1,800 animals for restoration projects throughout Wyoming and other western states.

Hunting accidents in the U.S. dropped 2 percent from 1990 to 1991. While that seems like good news, the number of fatal two-party accidents jumped 25 percent over the same period. According to Hunter Education Association figures, the rise in two-party fatalities can be attributed to a huge 53 percent jump in two-party rifle fatalities. Hunter judgement was a contributing factor in more than half of the two-party accidents, while skill and aptitude accounted for one-quarter.

Scientists are looking to plants as possible soil contaminant cleaners. Certain plant species can pull toxic metals such as lead, uranium and cadmium from the soil by storing the metals in their leaves. According to the National Wildlife Federation, the plants represent what could be the least destructive way to recover dangerous metals from a contaminated site.

The bald eagle returned to Connecticut as a nesting species for the first time in about 40 years, reports Bird Watcher's Digest. Two young were fledged from a nest at the Barkhamsted Reservoir. The last known eagle nesting occurred in the state in the 1950s. One experts points to the success of eagle recovery programs in the Northeast and suggests the birds are moving into the state as prime nesting sites to the north of Connecticut become occupied.

It seems likely that Michigan will offer a record number of elk permits this year as the state's elk herd has expanded beyond expected levels. According to the North Woods Call, Michigan's objective is to keep the herd between 800 and 900 elk; the latest survey recorded 1,350. That population level could prompt wildlife officials to offer as many as 500 permits to harvest elk, almost double the 270 issued last year. The Call says it would be the biggest eastern U.S. elk hunt in modern times.

The Appalachian Trail is 2,146.6 miles long, at least that's the latest figure available. Appalachian Trailway News says although the north and south trailheads remain the same, trail relocations and new land acquisitions increase the mileage in between. For instance, trail through-hikers (those who traverse the entire Maine to Georgia route) have another 3.7 miles to contend with this year.

Answer: The common cattail.

Working Together for Wildlife



- ◆ “Bear Run” by Bob Sopchick is the 11th limited edition fine art print for the Working Together for Wildlife program.

As with previous editions, “Bear Run” is limited to 600 signed and numbered prints on acid-free, 100 percent rag paper. Image size is about 15x22½ inches. The prints are \$125, delivered; framed prints cost \$97.50 more.

Proceeds from WTFW sales benefit Pennsylvania’s nongame management and research projects. So far, the program has raised more than \$1 million and has helped bring eagles, ospreys, otters and other species back to our landscape.

- ◆ Limited numbers of past prints are still available: kestrel ('86), elk ('87), egret ('88), white-tailed deer ('89), bald eagle ('90), red fox ('91) and ruffed grouse ('92).

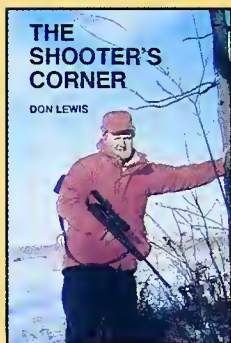
Don't forget to order a 1993 WTFW patch for only \$3. Last year's ruffed grouse patch sold out, so don't wait too long. Some patches from past years are still available, though. Ask for a complete list of sale items when placing your order.



- ◆ Order from the Pennsylvania Game Commission, Dept. M5, 2001 Elmerton Ave., Harrisburg, PA 17110-9797.



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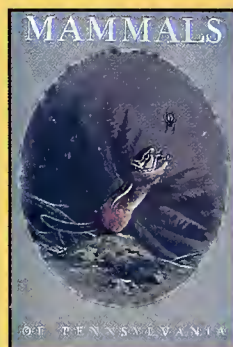
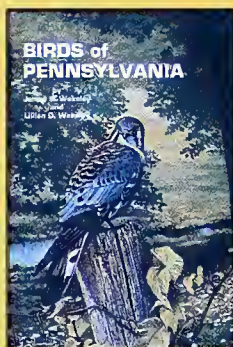


The Shooter's Corner by Don Lewis is a 449-page hardcover detailing nearly every facet of the shooting sports.
Price: \$15

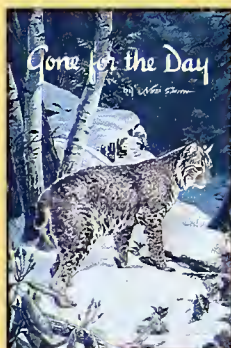
Pennsylvania Big Game Records, 1965-1986, lists the state's official trophy deer and bear records, along with many stories of exciting hunts.
Price: \$10



Birds of Pennsylvania, a 214-page hardcover by James and Lillian Wakeley, highlights birds most commonly found here, plus information on their biology and behavior.
Price: \$10

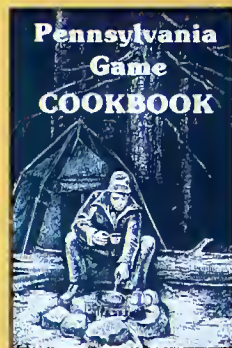


Mammals of Pennsylvania by J. Kenneth Doherty et al profiles the state's mammals — from voles and shrews to bear and deer — along with their roles in state history.
Price: \$4



Gone for the Day is a compilation of Game News columns written and illustrated by famed wildlife artist and naturalist, the late Ned Smith.
Price: \$4

Pennsylvania Game Cookbook is a collection of nearly 200 recipes for cooking popular, and not so popular, game animals.
Price: \$4



All prices include tax, handling and postage. Make check or money order (no cash, please) payable to Pennsylvania Game Commission, Dept. MS, 2001 Elmerton Ave., Harrisburg, PA 17110-9797. Be sure to ask for a complete list of the agency's paid and free publications.

PENNSYLVANIA GAME NEWS

MAY 1993

ONE DOLLAR



Working Together for Wildlife



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COVER PAINTING BY MARK BRAY
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Editorial

\$1.3 Billion & Counting

HUNTING has long been recognized as a major influence on Pennsylvania economics, and over the years many attempts have been made to measure the many financial aspects associated with the sport. Applying traditional economic principles and techniques to such a loosely defined "enterprise" as hunting, however, left many factors unaccounted for in most of these studies.

In recent years, though, economics has gotten more sophisticated, and with today's computer modeling, it's become easier to identify and trace the effects hunter expenditures have throughout the economy.

In a recently released report, "The Economic Impacts of Hunting in Pennsylvania, 1987," prepared by Southwick Associates for the International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, the impact of hunting sales on other industries and individuals has been better defined than ever before.

This report is based on data from the 1985 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting and Wildlife-Associated Recreation and adjusted for inflation. The year 1987 was chosen so the results from Pennsylvania and other states could be compared to other studies.

According to this report, retail sales by hunters 16 years of age and older, totaled \$692.4 million in 1987. This was comprised of \$226.8 million on "special equipment," camps, campers and boats, for example; \$164.8 million on other expenditures such as licenses, magazine subscriptions, sportsmen's club dues; \$163.6 million on firearms, ammunition and other hunting equipment; and \$21 million on auxiliary equipment such as binoculars, boots and taxidermy costs.

In the next step of the analysis, computer modeling programs were used to break out the actual retail, wholesale and manufacturing components of these expenditures. This analysis went on to indicate that hunting related expenditures provided for 18,000 jobs in Pennsylvania, which generated \$367.3 million in salaries and wages. These expenditures also accounted for \$35.4 million in state sales taxes. One step further, the jobs went on to yield \$52.5 million and \$31.2 million in, respectively, federal and state income taxes. (It might be appropriate to interject here that although hunting generated \$66.6 million in state tax revenue, the Pennsylvania Game Commission receives no appropriations from general taxes.)

An important point touched upon in this report is that the hunting industry is composed of small, widely scattered manufacturers, wholesalers and retailers, and that hunting largely occurs in rural regions, which are often the most economically depressed. Therefore, hunting is dampening the effects of economic depression even more than the gross figures suggest.

All told, hunting generated \$1.3 billion in total economic effects in Pennsylvania in 1987.

That hunting is big business here has long been recognized, but tracking the myriad ramifications of these expenditures has been virtually impossible. And even the estimates mentioned here are based on assumptions that certainly biased the conclusions. Nonetheless, on balance, this analysis is a big step in further quantifying and defining the economic impact of the sport in Pennsylvania. — *Bob Mitchell*

Letters

Editor:

Paging through a recent issue of *Game News*, I couldn't believe how many bird articles there were. Since birdwatching is a new hobby of mine, my interest was immediately aroused.

After checking other issues, I found many more articles on birds. Without further delay, I sent for a three-year subscription.

I currently subscribe to several wild bird magazines, but your excellent articles will keep me informed on what's happening right here. I also was pleased to find the cost of *Game News* is only a third of other mags. Keep up the good work, and please don't change your format.

J.F. SCHWARTZ,
YOUNGSVILLE

Editor:

I hope the thief who stole my ladder stand during archery season reads *Game News*. I realize it was a mistake to leave the stand in the woods, even though it is family property. Doubting a nonhunter would have any use for it, I am presuming another hunter stole my stand, and, consequently, my husband and I posted our property for the first time in 19 years. Ironically, I experienced some exciting bowhunting moments with both feet on the ground.

L. KLOBUCHAR,
GIBSONIA

Editor:

I have accomplished a feat that I wonder if anyone has equaled or surpassed. In 1982, I began using a .44 Mag. Ruger handgun for deer hunting, and in the last

11 years, I've bagged nine does and two bucks.

Seven were one-shot kills, and I have missed a few, too. And I haven't connected on a bonus deer yet. I guess the first kill of the season goes to my head and it takes a year for me to calm down.

Handgun hunting has added a new challenge to my deer season, and I wonder how many others have tried this, too.

H.H. GREEN,
GREENVILLE

Editor:

I am against any program that acknowledges the taking of trophy animals (wild or otherwise) unless it is strictly administered and provides a harsh penalty for violators.

In too many instances, it seems, award programs provide the impetus for slob hunters. I say it's the thrill of the chase that remains the most fulfilling aspect of any hunt. The taking of game merely adds icing to the cake. Better not to have a program than to encourage the killing of game for the sake of notoriety.

Please, no awards.

J.P. MCCARTHY,
UPPER DARBY

Editor,

Perhaps your new "Letters" feature is the place to correct something published in your July issue. In Don Lewis' column "A

Muzzleloader Primer," it's said that most of the rifles used in the Civil War were flintlocks. While there may have been a skirmish or two where the flintlock was used, the military rifle of that era was the percussion cap.

A.C. HOBART,
ALLENTOWN

Editor:

I was sorry "Thornapples" would no longer be part of your magazine, but my disappointment has been salved considerably by Marcia Bonta's "The Naturalist's Eye." My immediate impression is that Marcia is a worthy successor.

G.M. WEAVER,
CLEARFIELD

Editor,

I've always considered *Game News* a first-class publication, and providing a readers' forum will certainly enhance the magazine.

I'd like to thank Keith Schuyler for the column on the United Bowhunters of Pennsylvania. As a county representative for the UBP, I realize how important it is to get our message out to more sportsmen.

It's also refreshing to see the Game Commission adopt a more aggressive role in our battle against the anti-hunting fanatics. Perhaps more outdoorsmen will be encouraged to join in the effort.

G.M. CHIURAZZI,
PITTSBURGH

**Your comments are welcome. Mail them to "Letters,"
2001 Elmerton Ave., Harrisburg, PA 17110-9797.
Letters will be edited for brevity and clarity.**

The Closest Encounter

Calling a gobbler in to shotgun range is no easy feat; getting one to come within 15 yards takes skill and a little bit of luck.

By D.L. Burkhart

A BREEZE, barely perceptible, touched my face as I topped the ridge. In the twilight of the approaching dawn every stump and tree trunk looked like a perfect hide. In the latter days of the previous week I had heard a gobbler talking here. On one occasion he came so close I could hear his footsteps rustling the leaves as he walked, just out of sight.

That particular day, however, for reasons known only to the turkey, he lifted up and sailed across the valley, landing in a winter wheat field. He gobbled once more as he disappeared into the bordering woods. I was left to figure out what had gone wrong. Perhaps he'd become nervous when the "hen" didn't show and decided to force the situation. A real hen easily could have followed the gobbler to the field, and he could see her do so.

On this day, though, I had an ace up my sleeve — or so it seemed. I was positioned just over the rim of the mountaintop, above his usual gobbling location. With the decoy in place, I positioned myself where I would have a shot inside 20 yards, the instant the bird became visible.

Presently the first wood thrush began to sing. Somewhere, far away, a dog barked twice and a farmyard rooster crowed. Two quiet clucks, muffled through camouflage gloves, floated out over the hillside, searching for interested ears. Only silence followed. During the next 30 minutes I tried several more call sequences, but they remained unanswered, too. Finally, overpowered by the quiet, I gave up and hiked back to the truck.

I drove several miles west to an area where I'd heard and, on three separate occasions, worked a gobbler. This time there were no other vehicles at the pull-off, so I would, at least, enjoy solitude in the woods. As I walked the logging road that looped over and along the small ridges, I passed a familiar mud puddle where the faded turkey tracks were so old that they'd lost their power to inspire me.

Every hundred yards or so I stopped to listen, and each time the diaphragm sent out five to six sharp, cutting notes. Aggres-



sively demanding, yet relatively quiet, I tried to infuse all the emotion and feeling into them that I could.

Prolonged silence in the turkey woods has an especially dampening effect on the spirit, and after a while my mind began to drift. My senses keyed in on the distant hammering of a pileated woodpecker. Closer to me the thumping roll of a displaying grouse provided some interest.

A little farther on I paused, and, out of habit, called again. Seconds later I thought I heard a turkey. The sound didn't seem to come from close by, so I backtracked about 70 yards to a hilltop so I could hear better. Just as I stopped, the gobbler sounded again, giving me a fix. He was across a narrow hollow, about halfway to the top of the big ridge to the south.

The bird was a good 300 yards away, so I decided to try to get closer. Keeping to the road, thankful for the quiet passage it afforded, I stole as close as the right-of-way permitted. Then I sneaked an additional 80 yards to the edge of a clearing where selective logging had removed most of the mature trees.

I quickly set up against the largest tree trunk I could find. I placed the decoy well in front and positioned the shotgun on my right knee. Once I was situated, the woods again heard my diaphragm's rapid excitement. So did the gobbler, and he immediately answered back.

A few minutes later, with no prompting from me, he gobbled again. To add a little variety, I clucked back twice, using a slate call. The tom shot back an instant reply and hollered a second time a split-second later. I responded by staying silent, trying to inspire him to come hunting me. About four minutes later he gobbled once more, this time noticeably closer. Switching back

to the mouth call, I waited a moment before beginning a series of soft purrs, ending each with a barely audible cluck.

Within seconds I heard something making a disturbance in the leaves off to my left. As slowly as I was able, I shifted in that direction. After another minute the noise stopped, and I didn't hear it again. Still scanning for any telltale movement

from that quarter, I was alerted by the single, soft snap of a twig somewhere on my right. I slowly rolled my eyes just in time to watch the black form of a turkey materialize from behind a fallen treetop 25 yards away.

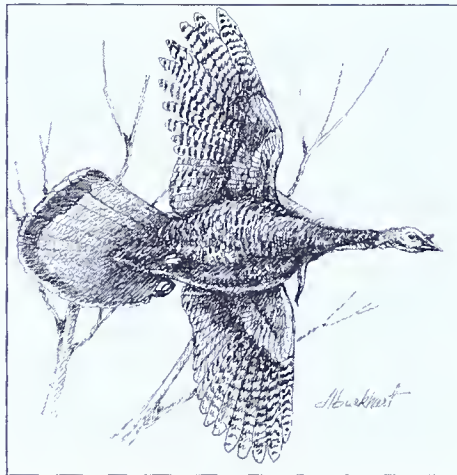
I had no idea how to get my gun aligned, but as the big bird worked closer I knew I had to try something. Step by step, beard swinging from side to side, he approached. Meanwhile, the Remington's barrel had begun an imperceptibly slow migration

in his direction. At about 15 yards he paused to survey the situation. Just as quickly, he started moving again.

Although I knew he'd seen the decoy, he seemed more interested in my camouflaged bulk than in the plastic hen. He stretched his neck and focused his gaze directly at me. Then he stretched higher still. He was staring holes right through me. I just knew he was going to spook.

How long he scrutinized me I don't know, but it felt like an hour. I didn't even blink, and I don't think he did either. Finally he relaxed, apparently satisfied, and, taking another precious step to the left, cocked his head and gave the decoy a quizzical glance.

Two of the softest, shortest purrs I could muster came out of my mouth, and the turkey took two more slow steps to the left. Finally, the gun was lined up, but the bird had turned toward me with its head low. Although I could've killed the bird at that



AFTER WORKING the bird in so close I could hear him in the leaves, the gobbler, for reasons of his own, lifted off and sailed across the valley.

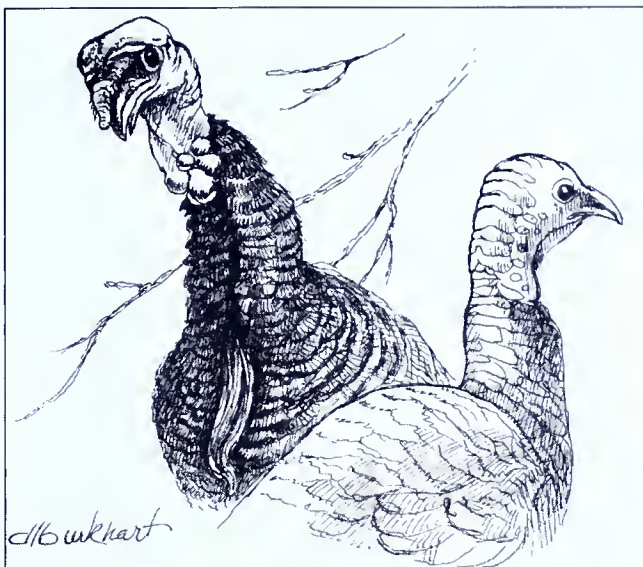
THE GOBBLER took one more step to the left and gave the decoy a quizzical glance. Two purrs from my diaphragm call got him to move a little more.

point, I'd have obliterated half the breast as well. Waiting just a few more seconds paid dividends because when he raised his head the shotgun's bead was framed in red wattles. At the sound of the shot, he collapsed into the leaves and never moved again.

The pride of achievement swept over me and, had anyone been there to watch, I'm certain they would've thought me a lunatic, as I was babbling "I got him" over and over again. The bird, I learned later, weighed 17 pounds, and it sported a handsome 9-inch beard. The spurs measured 11/16, which meant it was probably a 2-year-old.

After I regained some of my composure, I tagged and field-dressed the bird — my first spring turkey. Then, slipping back into some blaze orange, I took a few minutes to reenact the final moments. I found that the shot was taken at just 12 steps. The entire drama had taken only 25 minutes.

I also considered what lessons there were to be learned from this successful hunt, and I stored information that might help me in the future. As I looked at the



bluish-white head, now sadly faded, I wondered what had been different today.

In the past two weeks, he'd been worked at least half a dozen times by me and others I had spoken with. Perhaps my approach to calling, using no yelps, had helped. The fact that it was late in the season and there were fewer hens around probably didn't hurt. Or maybe I just got lucky.

At last, I gathered my gun and other gear, shouldered my prize, and began the long walk out. The sun was warm and it was a beautiful day.

Turkey Hunting Safety Tips

By now, spring turkey hunters should be aware that safety regulations require at least 100 square inches of fluorescent orange be worn while moving. We would also suggest that orange be worn or displayed at the calling location.

Here are some other safety guidelines that will help make your season safe and enjoyable.

- ♦ Positively identify your target. Be absolutely certain it's a legal turkey — one with a visible beard. And be sure your line of fire to the bird and beyond is clear.
- ♦ Stalking turkeys is illegal; hunting is by calling only. Get the bird to come to you.
- ♦ Assume every noise and movement is another hunter, not a turkey.
- ♦ Always set up against a tree, rock or other natural barrier that's at least as broad as your shoulders.
- ♦ If you spot another hunter moving in on your location, shout "Stop!" Never wave or make turkey sounds.
- ♦ Keep red, white and blue out of your clothing. These colors appear on gobblers in the spring.
- ♦ Preselect a zone of fire outside of which you will not shoot, especially when hunting with a partner.

Persistence Pays

A longtime deer hunter decides to expand his horizons and finds that spring gobbler hunting is a whole new, and difficult, ball game.

By H.T. Montgomery II

TWELVE YEARS of frustration, self-doubt, mistakes and just plain bad luck flashed through my mind as my gloved index finger tightened around the trigger. Beads of sweat, one for each step I'd taken over the past dozen years, gathered on my forehead. Now, as I was so close to finally bagging my first wild turkey, time decided to stand still.

The gold bead at the end of my Winchester's camouflaged barrel searched for the turkey's red, white and blue head. Would all the months of practicing and studying finally pay off? with dividends measured not in dollars but in a quick, clean kill. Would I finally silence my teasing critics and prove to them (and me) that I was more than just a successful deer hunter — that I could be a successful turkey hunter, too?

Twelve years is a long time to reach a goal. It takes only four to get a college education; four more will get a person close to becoming a doctor or lawyer. My studies, however, involved the great outdoors, especially wild turkeys and how to hunt them. If experience truly is the best teacher, I thought, then success would surely occur on this particular opening day.

My schooling began during the fall of 1978. I mistakenly assumed 16 years of deer hunting qualified me to pursue the wild turkey. After all, how smart (or lucky) could a bird be? Sure, I had read many articles touting the wild turkey's ability to outsmart the hunter, but I considered myself a better than average woodsman with better than average luck.

Opening day of the '78 fall season found me on a ridge overlooking my favorite deer hunting hollow. In truth, I was far more interested in locating a trophy whitetail instead of a 15-pound turkey. After the morning deer activity slowed down, I decided to try my very first call. I reached into my small game coat and pulled out the new Lynch box call I had purchased just two nights earlier.

Literally reading the directions and then just following along, I slid the lid across the lip of the box and got a yelp, yelp, yelp. Trying again, I got three more yelps. Then, before I could even think about putting down the box call, I saw movement to my right. Flying right at me, not 20 feet away, was a turkey — without a doubt the largest one I've ever seen.



It's hard to say which one of us was more startled. I sat there spellbound as the bronze beauty frantically beat its wings in an attempt to regain precious flying speed.

As it disappeared into the safety and solitude of the hollow, I remained fixed in total awe. I couldn't believe I had actually called in a wild turkey. On the other hand, thoughts of raising the brand new Savage 20-gauge/.222 resting across my lap never entered my mind. That's how my education began.

My schooling during the next few years brought new definitions to old words. I began to think dictionary publishers should feature a turkey silhouette next to the words "frustration," "inconsistency" and "wary."

During the spring, hens walked within a stone's throw of me while magnificent gobblers stayed just out of shotgun range. Areas that seemed void of birds in the fall season would be overrun with turkeys when it was time to hunt deer. Hours of scouting and calling were frequently ruined by mere seconds of poor judgement or mistakes. Family, friends and sometimes even I thought the only way I would bag a turkey was at the local grocery store.

In 1988 I launched an all-out campaign to rid myself of what had become a lengthy curse. I purchased a diaphragm call and practiced almost daily for six months. Numerous turkey hunting videotapes were added to my library. An audio cassette tape of turkey calls kept me company everywhere I drove. I was determined to do everything I could to bag a gobbler in the spring of 1989.

My hunting partner

is also my uncle, Jack Reed of Oil City. He was in charge of locating as many gobblers as he could. By the time the season had arrived, he had found quite a few flocks, some with only five or so birds and others with up to 25.

We decided to concentrate on one of the smaller flocks because it held more gobblers than hens, it would attract less attention from other hunters, and because it was in a relatively easy area to hunt. Everything was set; all we needed was the birds to cooperate and me to eliminate all mistakes.

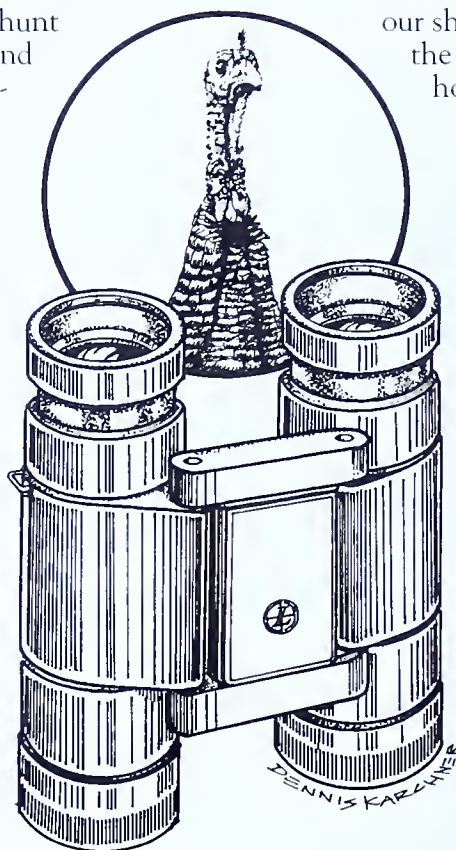
When we arrived at our parking spot we found two other vehicles. After a brief discussion, though, we decided to stick with our plans. There was plenty of territory to hunt, and we didn't know which direction the other hunters had gone. Besides, too much time and effort had gone into this hunt to give up.

Undaunted, Jack and I grabbed our shotguns and headed down the pipeline toward what we hoped were two toms.

A 45-minute walk brought us to a ridge overlooking a beautiful mountain stream. And if the past few evenings were any indication, the birds would be roosting in the pine trees covering both hillsides below.

Daybreak was nearing as I carefully slid three No. 6 3-inch magnums into my shotgun. Jack loaded his with 2 $\frac{3}{4}$ No. 4s. When I looked at Jack he nodded, indicating he was ready for me to start.

I positioned my mouth call and let out a soft series of yelps. Without a moment's hesitation, a resounding gobble echoed through the hollow. The bird was across the



SECONDS SEEMED like hours as I scanned the forest in front of me. Suddenly, to my right, I glimpsed a flash of white in the tree slashings.

stream and a short way up the opposite hillside.

Psyched and anxious, Jack and I slipped into the woods and set up about 100 yards apart. Once positioned, I lowered my face mask and let out another series of soft yelps and clucks. The gobbler let loose again from his tree perch, but this time he was so close it seemed the tree I was resting against was going to shake.

Before deciding on my next move, the sound of leaves rustling and twigs snapping told me something or someone was approaching from behind. Thinking it may be another hunter coming into the action, I refrained from calling and very slowly turned in the direction of the noise.

There, about 50 yards behind and slightly to my left, was a hunter positioning himself. I shouted to get his attention and he acknowledged my presence. I got up and headed down into the hollow to put some distance between us and also to get closer to the now-silent tom.

I moved a good hundred yards and then found another suitable location. From my new position, I could hear other gobblers in the distance, but the one I was after remained quiet. I attempted to make the most enticing series of calls I ever produced. A double gobble let me know he was still there and obviously still interested. Even before I could call again he gobbled once more, only this time from ground level and much closer.

I found myself going over a mental checklist of all the dos and don'ts I learned from the cassettes, tapes and magazines I had studied over the past years. My heart was racing as he gobbled just out of sight.

Seconds seemed like hours as I slowly scanned the forest in front of me. Suddenly, to my right, I glimpsed a flash of white in the tree slashings. Yes, it was a turkey's head, and I watched as he gobbled again. I knew I couldn't move. He slowly made his way out of the toppings and across the hillside toward me.

I TRIED to make an enticing series of calls, and a double gobble let me know the bird was still there and obviously still interested.

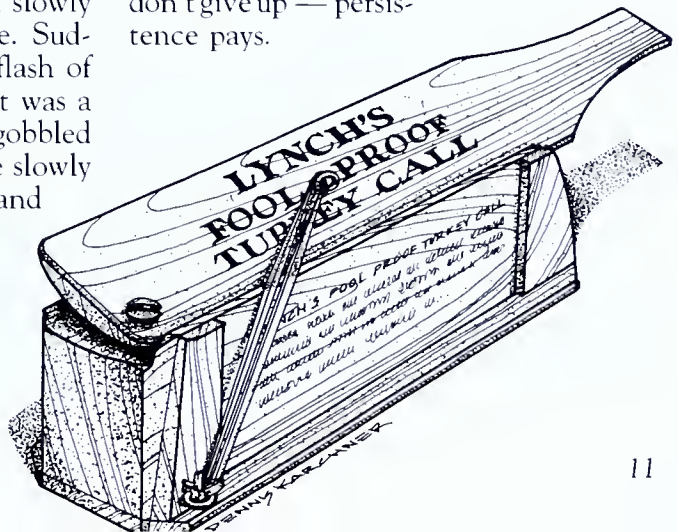
As he jumped onto a small stump about 40 yards away, he let out another gobble. From that position I could clearly see a beard hanging from the jet black breast. If he continued in his current direction, he would pass behind a large tree about 20 yards below me. That, I thought, was my best chance.

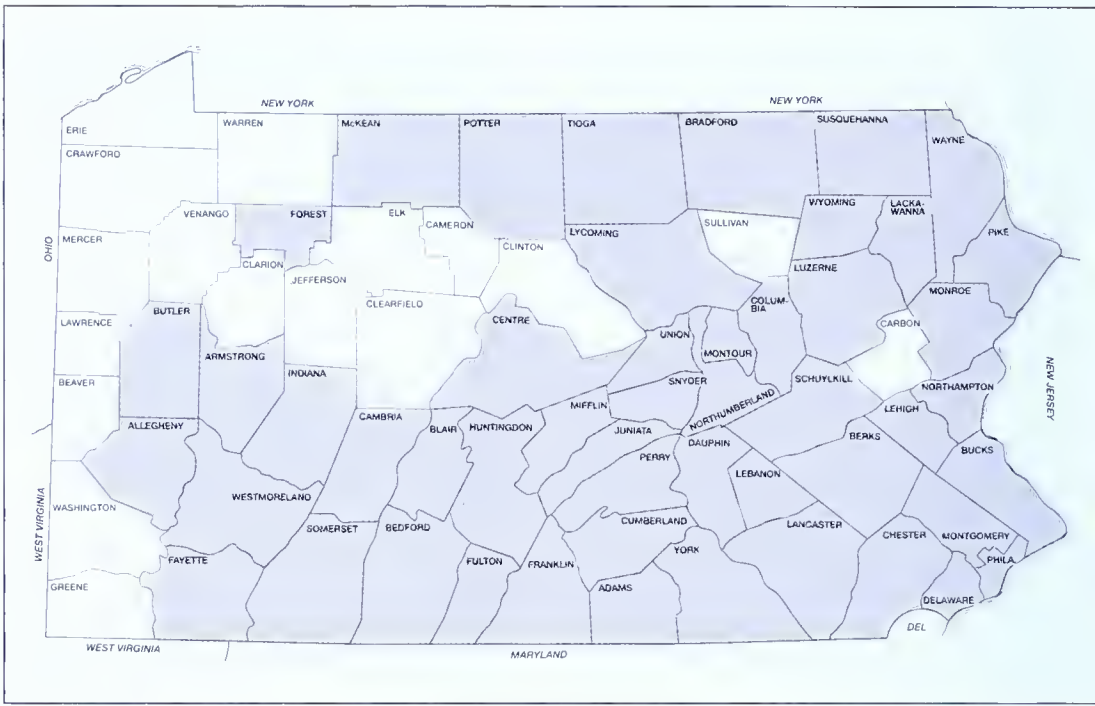
The tom then jumped off the stump and — almost unbelievably — continued right toward me. As he passed behind the tree, I slipped off the safety and slightly repositioned my shotgun. The black-feathered body was visible as he gobbled once again, but I was waiting for a shot at his head and neck.

When he stepped from behind the tree my finger tightened around the trigger, and in one moment all the frustrations of the past years seemed meaningless. He was down for the count. My first turkey, a 14-pound jake, may not be a trophy to more experienced hunters, but that bird gave me thrills and excitement only another turkey hunter could begin to understand.

I would like to believe the hunter who moved in behind me was either inexperienced or just didn't know I was there. Safety is obviously a primary concern for every hunter, especially in the spring, and nobody in the turkey woods appreciates having another hunter sneak in.

I'm sure the celebration Jack and I had that morning spooked all the other birds within hearing distance, and I hereby apologize to any hunters around at the time. On a more serious note, I hope this story will encourage other hunters who have been outwitted by this crafty bird. Just remember, if you want something bad enough, don't give up — persistence pays.





THE 361 ANIMALS that tested positive for rabies in 1992 were: 208 raccoons, 75 skunks, 32 cats, 19 foxes, 13 cows, six bats, two horses, two goats, two groundhogs, one otter and one bobcat.

IT HAS BEEN 10 years since the rabies virus associated with raccoons first appeared in Pennsylvania. It entered the southcentral region of the state from Maryland, and since then it has spread to just about every county of the state, except for those in the west and northwest. It has also entered New Jersey, New York and Delaware.

Last year there were 361 confirmed cases in animals tested because they had bitten or scratched somebody or because they were domestic animals suspected of exposure to the virus. It's likely, of course, that there were many more animals with rabies.

Comparing the number of confirmed cases from year to year gives some indication of the trends, but it is by no means accurate. For instance, in 1989 there were 702 confirmed rabies cases

here. This may mean there were more cases that year than in '92, but the difference is more likely due to the fact that in 1989 the center

Rabies Update

By Larry Iampietro

of the epidemic was in the southeastern part of the state. Because of the region's high population level, contact between animals and humans is more frequent. Reported rabies infections are also on the rise because more testing is being conducted, which results in more positives being detected.

The increased focus on the rabies epidemic has also led to a rise in the number of animals being vaccinated against the disease. A mark of the success of the vaccination program is the fact that, once again, no dogs were found to be rabid last year. However, many cats are still contracting the disease, no doubt because so-called "farm cats" are exempt from the state law requiring cats and dogs to be vaccinated. Livestock vaccinations have also helped keep confirmed cases low.

Raccoons are the primary carriers in Pennsylvania. Through saliva injection — by means of biting and sometimes scratching — the virus can be spread to any warm-blooded animal. Many kinds of animals, including an otter and a bobcat, were found to be rabid in 1992.

Some rabid bats are found each year, but they have nothing to do with the strain of raccoon rabies spreading throughout the state. There have always been rabid bats here. Bats can carry the virus for long periods of time, but they usually spread it only among themselves. The incidence of rabies among bats is less than 1 percent, much lower than many people think.

The use of an oral vaccine on wild animals is still being evaluated. Two years ago, vaccine-treated baits were placed on an isolated state game lands, and the project showed some measure of success in reducing the incidence of rabies. Also, through the use of the vaccine, an “immune barrier” has been successfully set up on New Jersey’s Cape May peninsula.

At this time, however, our best defense against rabies is to vaccinate pets and livestock and to avoid suspect animals. This includes handling baby wild animals such as raccoons, woodchucks and foxes. If such an animal bites or scratches you, it must be tested, and because brain material is necessary for the test, the animal must be killed. It can never be overemphasized: Do not handle or in any way touch baby wild animals.

Brain material is used for testing because that’s where the rabies virus concentrates. When a bite occurs, any rabies virus that enters the body follows the nervous system, not the bloodstream. This process of spreading along the nervous system, finally ending at the brain and salivary gland, usually takes weeks or months. Because of this, there is plenty of time to have testing done before treatment may have to begin.

Dogs and cats do not have to be tested this way. They can be put through a quarantine instead. This is because dogs and cats — unlike most other animals — can live only a very short period of time after the virus first appears in their saliva. If a

dog or cat is still alive 10 days after biting someone or something, its saliva could not have contained the rabies virus at the time of the bite.

This quarantine does not have to take place in a veterinarian’s office, but the dog or cat must be confined and observed daily. If the animal dies during the period, it is then tested for the presence of rabies virus in its brain.

If you are bitten or scratched by an animal that proves to be rabid, treatment should begin. Rabies takes a long time to develop, so there’s plenty of time for testing or quarantine. Some overly “aggressive” or misinformed doctors don’t seem to believe this and administer rabies shots prematurely. Like with any other medical decision, if you’re not totally comfortable with the advice you’re being given, get a second opinion.

Treatment consists of one shot of Rabies Immuno Globulin and a 5-shot series of rabies vaccine given over a one-month period. It has proven to be 100 percent effective if given in time (generally within 10 days).

If you have a justified reason for having an animal tested because it has bitten or scratched you, a family member or a domestic animal, it should be submitted to one of the state laboratories. Submissions can be made through a veterinarian, physician, wildlife conservation officer, animal control officer, humane society or county health department.

There is no charge for this testing. A free shipment service is provided by district offices of the state Department of Agriculture. Results are usually available within five to 24 hours of arrival at the laboratory.

As has been the case since the current rabies problem developed in Pennsylvania, residents are encouraged to have their pets vaccinated — as required by law — and to leave wild animals alone. By following these simple precautions, there’s no reason to be unduly alarmed about rabies.

The author is a microbiologist with the Pennsylvania Department of Health’s Bureau of Laboratories.



Sandy and the Little Fox

By Charles E. Travis, Jr.

FROM THE TIME I was young, hunting dogs of one kind or another were my constant companions in the field. They not only helped put some weight in the game bag but were also a joy to watch do their work. To many, myself included, that's a good bit of what hunting is all about.

In those days most farms, large or small, had a larger dog to herd the milk cows and a small dog or two to keep barn rats and other vermin in check. On our place we had two wire hair terriers for that chore.

My father wasn't a gunner, but he gave me every encouragement, and he did own a 12-gauge double barrel hammer gun with 30-inch barrels. At eight years of age, I was by no means able to handle his gun. But I owned and knew how to shoot my rifle, a .22 Stevens Favorite. With it I had gotten quite a few woodchucks during the summer.

One of our neighbors had a good size farm. It included about 20 acres of woodland that had a healthy population of squirrels. I had shot several woodchucks out of this farmer's hay fields during the summer, and one day he said to me: "Son, when hunting season opens you can work on those squirrels that are eating my corn. Maybe you can get one of those fancy pheasants, too."

When the time came, I took the two terriers and did, indeed, thin out his squirrels, but never was I lucky enough to get a ringneck. They were not yet plentiful in our area, but by the time I was 10 or 12 years old they had caught on and were in good supply. Of course, this all took place before a person had to be at least 12 years old to hunt here.

In those days the Game Commission would give farmers, and everyone else who had the facilities to raise them, fertile pheasants eggs to hatch. Several times my dad and I used guinea hens and bantam hens to hatch the pheasant eggs, and we had pretty good success, eventually releasing the birds on farms when they matured. Later, the Commission discontinued the egg program and, instead, gave day-old chicks, which they still do to some extent.

The old 12-gauge hammer gun had gotten some use the previous few years, but when I reached 14 — old enough, with written parental permission, to buy a hunting license — I wanted a more modern firearm, one without exposed hammers that had to be cocked for every shot.

Unexpectedly, my wish came true. I had about a mile and a half walk to school, and after entering the town limits there were several houses along the street. For the owners of two of the houses, I mowed grass during the summer and took out ashes from their furnaces or stoves each Saturday morning during the winter. I made 50 cents for cutting the grass and the same for carrying out the ashes.

One day an older lady down the block stopped me and asked if I would cut her lawn. I readily agreed and then told her I could handle her ashes in the winter, too. She agreed.

When we walked around to look at her backyard and check her mower, I saw a handsome liver and white springer spaniel named Sandy lying on the roof of a well-built dog house. While I was making a fuss over her dog, the woman explained that he had belonged to her late husband.

One day later in the summer, after she got to know me better and found out I was a hunter, she called me into the house to pay me for cutting the grass. Normally she came outside with the 50-cent piece — always a 50-cent piece, never two quarters or nickels and dimes.

On the kitchen table was a canvas gun case with leather trim — the kind that held the stock went in one compartment and the barrels and fore-end in another — and three boxes of shells. Over the back of one of the chairs hung a canvas gunning coat. The lady unbuckled the gun case and took out the gun. “Charlie,” she said, “do you know how to put this together?”

Pretty Little Fox

Did I ever. I had taken apart Dad’s old hammer gun umpteen times just for the heck of it, so I could certainly assemble this beauty. It was a 20-gauge Fox Sterlingworth with a nicely figured walnut stock (later I found it had automatic ejectors).

After I assembled the gun and was looking it over, the lady said: “Charlie, I want you to have this. I have no use for it nor any relatives who can use it, and I am sure you can put it to good use.”

She also gave me the coat, which was a Duxbak that took me a couple of years to grow into. It still had her late husband’s hunting license attached with what was known in those days as “bachelor buttons.”

The shells came, too, and a jointed wooden cleaning rod complete with a woolen swab and a wire brush. Before I left the house with my treasures, I put my arms around my benefactor and hugged her tight. I had a lump in my throat and I’m sure tears in my eyes, too.

On Labor Day, she offered me the dog, too, saying: “He likes to hunt so much it’s a shame to keep him tied up, and he seems so happy when you’re here. And I can see that you are fond of him, too.”

She even gave me the dog box. That afternoon one of my brothers helped me load the box into our wagon, and Sandy rode between us on the seat as I drove the horse home. Tucked into my shirt pocket were Sandy’s pedigree papers, which the lady said I might want at some future date.

Looking at the papers later, I discovered that Sandy was a Welsh springer spaniel, just over two years old, from the famous Avendale Kennels in Canada. In those days they used to have a small ad in *Field & Stream* nearly every month.

Back then, small game season opened on Nov. 1, no matter what day it was — except, of course, Sunday. One day after school, a couple of weeks before the opener, with my parent’s note of permission in my pocket, I went up the street to the county treasurer’s office to get my first hunting license.

The treasurer was a family friend who had a farm about six miles from my home. He was a well-known sportsman who raised field trial beagles, in addition to maintaining a large Guernsey dairy herd. After he filled out my license, he said: “Charlie, you’re welcome to hunt on my place anytime. There are plenty of rabbits and some pheasants in the corn. If you have a hunting buddy, bring him along, too.”

I thanked him but never made it out there that season because at the time my family didn’t own an automobile. But in later years Sandy, the little Fox and I got to that farm many times. The owner was right, too. There were plenty of rabbits and some pheasants around.

In those days, plowing was done with horses or mules. Corn was cut by hand and put into shocks to be husked by hand later. The fencerows were wide and grown up in all sorts of trees and shrubs, offering plenty of food and cover for all kinds of wildlife. The fertilizer came directly from the barnyards and weed control was a cultivator drawn by two horses or mules, until the corn grew too high to be worked.



WHEN THE TIME CAME, I took the two terriers with me and did indeed thin out his squirrels, but never was I lucky enough to get a ringneck rooster. That, of course, was back before I had Sandy.

There was, therefore, an abundance of grass and weeds in the corn fields, providing even more food and cover for game, especially pheasants.

While there were numerous coveys of bobwhite quail in the tall weeds of the fallow fields, we youngsters didn't shoot at them very often. Heck, they startled us so much when they burst out from under our feet that it was tough shooting. But we soon found that there were always a few stragglers that would get up one or two at a time after most of the covey had left. Bye and bye we became proficient enough to knock down a couple.

One of the farms we hunted had a long and narrow meadow with a small creek running the length of it. On both sides of this creek were lots of scattered brier patches of various sizes. The owner and his hired hand hunted only the first day of the season; the rest of the time the farm was open to anyone who asked for permission.

This spot was worked best by two hunters, one on each side of a brier patch and Sandy going in one end. No cover was too thick for him. If it got too dense he would

crawl on his belly to rout out game. Over the years we took a lot of rabbits out of those brier patches, plus a ringneck now and then.

We always made it a point to drop off a couple rabbits at the farmhouse every time we went there, no matter if we shot them on the place or not. It was only neighborly — and good insurance, too. We were always welcome on that farm, which today, like all the surrounding farms, is covered with houses.

Good Luck

For some reason, none of my brothers were interested in hunting, trapping or fishing. But for me, those outdoor sports were the biggest part of my life. A couple times, though, one brother did ask if he could go hunting with me, saying he would bring me good luck.

I didn't encourage him because I felt he would only be in the way or would get too tired from walking or would be talking too much at the wrong time. Nevertheless, he had helped me bring Sandy home when I got her, I thought, so one night I told him

to be ready to go out the next morning before school.

My brother and I left the house very early. We were about a half-mile from home, and Sandy was working back and forth in front of us as we crossed a meadow. The cattle had grazed the grass pretty short, so I really didn't expect to see any game there, but we had to cross the field to get to our destination.

There were several patches of higher grass scattered around, and suddenly a big rabbit bolted out of one patch—its cotton tail showing up bright in the first light streaks of dawn. He did as he saw fit when the little Fox barked. Sandy raced over and picked it up.

Shortly after daybreak, we were on the edge of a field

of standing corn next to a fallow field containing waist high weeds. Sandy, who was working just ahead of us, paused for an instant, then rushed into the thick grass and weeds of the corn. Up jumped three ringnecks—two hens and a cockbird.

I swung on the rooster and dropped him. As Sandy went to retrieve the fallen bird, another cockbird had flushed away from the others and landed in a meadow across the road.

Not wasting any time, I handed the bird to my brother, called Sandy to heel and hurried across the meadow to see if we could find the other pheasant before he moved too far away.

As we hustled over, I explained the strategy to my brother. I planned to get above where the bird had landed. I hoped that when Sandy flushed the cockbird it would go downhill, giving me an open shot.

The plan worked. Sandy bounced him

out toward the open field; the little Fox barked again and the rooster crumpled in mid-air. As Sandy raced across the grass to pick him up, my brother was ecstatic, and I wasn't feeling bad myself.

I put both pheasants into the game bag, making sure the beautiful tail feathers stuck out both sides of my coat. That was

the custom then. I was feeling pretty happy because it was the first time two pheasants went home with me on one trip.

The field we were crossing had a small spring-fed stream that led to a swamp and, beyond, a larger creek. As we were looking for a firm place to cross the little stream, a snipe came flushing up out of the weeds. When it was about three or four feet off the ground, I dropped it.

Sandy, who was at heel, quickly brought it in. It was the only snipe I ever shot; in fact, it was the only one I had ever seen—they were rare in our area.

As we were walking up to the road it dawned on me that I hadn't fired the left barrel at all that morning. I told my brother that this was the luckiest morning I'd ever had. He laughed and said, "I told you I'd bring you good luck."

On the way home, a farmer on his way to the creamery in town picked us up. My brother sat on the seat beside him; Sandy and I sat in the back of the wagon with the four or five cans of milk.

As the farmer urged his horse into a trot, I caught a snatch of my brother's conversation . . . "and he didn't even dirty the left barrel."

The man turned around to me and said, "Son, you must be a pretty good shot."

"No," I said. "I just had my good luck brother with me today."



THE THINKING was that Sandy could flush the bird from above and it would go downhill into a tangle of brush. That's just what we did, and the plan worked perfectly.

In Search of a Longbeard

By Richard C. Cole, Sr.

I'LL NEVER FORGET the first time I saw a gobbler in a full strut. I was scouting before the season, right after a late winter storm had left behind five inches of snow. I was walking back a game lands access road at dawn when a gobbler sounded off.

Trying to get a little closer, I eased down the road only to be startled by a dark image in the snow ahead of me. I immediately realized it was a large black bear, and I watched as it crossed the road and vanished into some laurel.

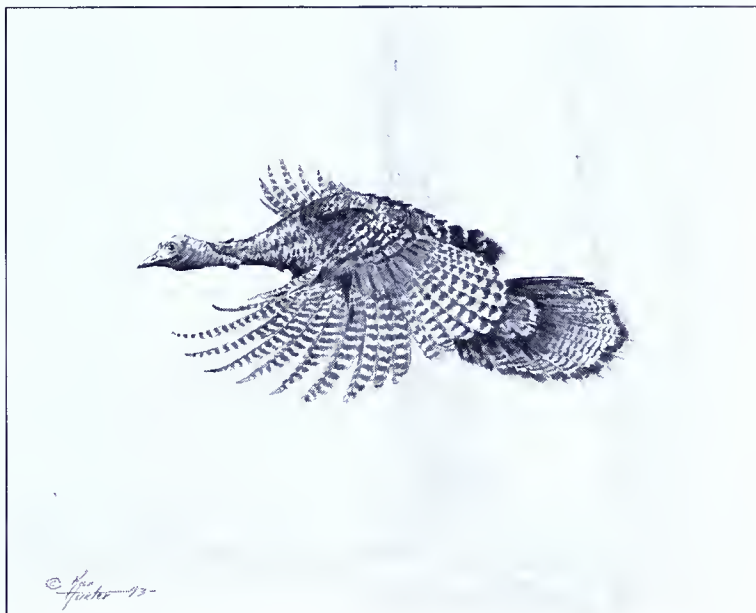
A loud gobble brought me back to my reason for being there. I slipped down over the bank and sat against a large birch tree. I had no intention of trying to call him in. Instead, I just sat and listened.

As luck would have it, the bird flew down from his roost tree and landed only 30 yards away. Then, for a good half-hour, he gobbled and strutted right in front of me. I couldn't get over the tom's long beard and full fan of tail feathers.

I knew right then that I was destined to bag such a gobbler. I was hooked. I had bagged one turkey, a jake, but I had never actually seen a wild turkey strut. I was so excited I could hardly wait for the upcoming season.

As it turned out, the season came and went without me firing a shot. I was hardly discouraged, though. Over the next five years I hunted turkeys more and more

aggressively. I even bagged a couple, but they weren't longbeards like the bird that had gotten me hooked. I had my chances, but I always seemed to be moving, calling too much, or doing something wrong. I



AS LUCK would have it, the bird flew down from his roost tree and landed only 30 yards away. Then he gobbled and strutted right in front of me for a good half-hour.

chalked all that up to experience, knowing my time would come; it was just a matter of time.

By the time the 1991 season rolled around, I was particularly excited. I had seen lots of turkeys and plenty of sign during the fall archery and muzzleloader seasons. I knew the area — closed to fall turkey hunting — would offer some fine spring gobbler hunting because the population there was on the upswing. I also knew I would find plenty of other hunters.

Therefore, anxious to avoid the crowds, I headed for a favorite spot of mine in the

mountains not far from my home. The opening morning I heard a tom at first light, but it was almost a mile away. I waited a few minutes and then gave several hoots with my owl hooter, hoping to find a gobbler nearby. No other toms answered, so I went after the one that was making all the noise.

When I got close he was still on roost, so I quickly found a big tree to lean against and set up. After several minutes I stroked a few soft yelps followed by a couple clucks. Before I could even finish, though, the old tom cut in with a double gobble. He was mad, and I thought it would be only a matter of minutes before I'd be tagging the old boy. But as luck would have it, my entire plan went sour.

In Business

The old tom flew from his roost and landed about 60 yards from me. And when he started strutting and gobbling like crazy, I thought I was in business. But he wouldn't move any closer. Then I caught movement out of the corner of my eye. It was another turkey, a hen, which meant too much competition for me. She and the tom slipped over the hill, and I never saw or heard anything the rest of the morning.



The third day of the season found me hunting the area where I had seen and heard so many turkeys the fall before. It had rained during the night and was thundering when I got out of the car.

I hooted several times as I hiked out the ridge, and just as soon as I got to a power line I heard a turkey gobble to my left. I slipped down the hill, set up against a large tree about 125 yards from him and got out my Lynch box call.

I quietly loaded my gun and then stroked some soft tree yelps. I was immediately answered by a double gobble. After a few minutes I sent out several soft clucks and he gobbled again.

Although I was tempted, I refrained from calling anymore until he flew off his roost. I waited and waited, and after about 20 gobbles I heard wings thrashing in the treetops.

Again I thought things were going my way when he flew up through the woods and landed only 20 yards away. He went down, though, over a small rise, and all I could see were tail feathers as he strutted. Any move on my part would spook him, I was sure, so I just waited.

As the bird strutted and pranced, my nerves were on end. He just never gave me a clear shot at his head and neck. Then it happened. He moved uphill, into an opening. When he dropped his feathers and craned his neck I took aim on his head and squeezed the trigger.

As the bird flopped his last, I knew my long quest for a boss gobbler was over. After tagging my trophy I sat down and admired him. He had 1-inch spurs, a 9-inch beard and weighed 20 pounds.

While sitting there savoring the moment, I thought of how long and how much time I had spent to bag this beautiful bird. Then I gave thanks for being alive and in good health and to all the sportsmen before me who made this day in Penn's Woods possible.

THE GOBBLER strutted and pranced, never giving me a clear shot at his head and neck. Then it happened. He moved into an opening, and when he craned his neck I took aim and squeezed the trigger.

A Third Time Charm

The author, in his third year of turkey hunting, works three birds in as many weeks — all within a stone's throw of his house.

BOOM! The blast from my 12-gauge shattered the early morning stillness. The flopping gobbler headed for the ravine from which he and a hen had just emerged. I trotted toward the bird, wanting to make certain my first gobbler did not escape. I quickly reached the edge of the ravine and peered down the steep slope.

The big tom was lying in a small stream at the bottom of the ravine, flapping slightly, but I knew he would go no farther. Very carefully, I began my descent down to the bird 25 yards below. I took three slow careful steps, but on the fourth step I lost my footing and slid down the slippery leaf-covered slope.

I came to an abrupt halt at the bottom with both my boots sunk into the mud at the edge of the shallow stream. I quickly got myself onto dry land before retrieving my prize. After some self-congratulations and a high-five to the air, I looked at my watch. It was 7:50 a.m. on Saturday, May 16, the beginning of the third week of the 1992 spring gobbler season. This was also my third year of trying to bag the wary springtime gobbler, although this fact was lost on me at the time.

Admiring the magnificent bird I had just tagged, I examined the wide fan of his tail, his 9½-inch beard and 1-inch spurs. I sat down on a nearby log to savor the moment — savor, in this case, meaning to catch my breath before climbing back out of the ravine. While resting, my thoughts traveled back to the events that led me to this climactic moment.

I live in western Erie County, not far from Elk Creek. This section of Elk Creek snakes across the region in a series of sharp bends before flowing past the historic cov-

ered bridge at Gudgeonville and then winding its way toward Lake Erie. The sharp bends in the creek are flanked by sheer cliffs 200 feet or more high.

My neighbor's property, on which I was hunting, consists of 125 acres of cornfields, hay and pasture, intermixed with scattered woodlots. The tree line that separates the arable land from the sheer walls of the creek varies in width, from a mere 10 yards at its narrowest point to 75 yards at its widest. This tree line is interrupted in

By Andy Foyle

several locations by deep ravines formed by small feeder streams that cut into the Elk Creek gorge and cascade down the cliff face like miniature waterfalls. It was in one of these ravines that I found my turkey.

In previous years, our springtime forays were split between SGL 152 in Crossingville, SGL 109 near Waterford, and some woodlands just east of McKean. We'd always seen hens or heard gobblers in the distance, but we were never able to call any in.

Early this particular spring I began to hear reports of turkey sightings from several neighbors. These reports, coupled with the fact I had seen four gobblers in the area during the previous fall's hunting seasons, really began to stir my interest in turkeys. They were, after all, nearly in my backyard. Then I saw a flock of nine early one April from my kitchen window, confirming that this spring's hunt would be close to home.

My hunting partner for the past several years, muttering something about having better odds with trout, informed me that this spring he and his son were going fishing instead. My father-in-law wasn't able to accompany me, either, so I was on



my own. That was okay because the idea of hunting in the woods right behind the house began to appeal to me more and more.

It was a busy spring and I didn't get to scout as much as I would have liked. But I'd hunted the area for the past six years and had a fairly good idea of where the birds were likely to be. I chose to set up near a thick stand of pines along an old road leading down to Elk Creek.

On opening morning, I briskly walked the mile or so from my house to my selected spot. After fastening my fluorescent orange band around the tree, I settled in. I decided to start with my "raspy young hen" diaphragm call because I thought it made the sweetest sound.

I was just getting ready to let out a soft tree call when I heard a noise on the trail I had just come down. Slowly turning around, I saw my neighbor's cousin.

We exchanged quick greetings, wished each other luck, and he headed off for a location farther down the path. After two hours, the only activity near my spot was a raccoon heading home from his night of foraging and two fat fox squirrels feeding in some nearby beech trees. After my neighbor's cousin came back up the path, I decided to relocate.

When I got to the top of the gorge overlooking the creek and points south, I checked my watch and realized there was plenty of hunting time left. I headed across an old cornfield to the tree line bordering the gorge. Working my way toward a wooded area at one of Elk Creek's bends, I paused by an opening in the tree line and let out a series of yelps.

My call was immediately answered by a gobbler that sounded about 400 yards away, around the bend of the creek. I quickened my pace, planning to set up in the woods at the bend. After covering 100 yards, I started another series of yelps, only to be interrupted by the excited tom.

He sounded as if he had covered about half the distance between us, so I knew I had to get set quickly. I hurried the last hundred yards to the wooded area. I was on a ridge about 10 yards wide. On the left was the steep gorge overlooking Elk Creek and on the right was a shallower, less steep ravine.

A quick assessment told me to set up on the stream side of the ridge. The largest tree close by was a 12-inch maple, so I quickly sat at its base. A short series of yelps was quickly answered by the gobbler, now only 50 yards away. Excitedly, I began the waiting game.

The tom was really anxious. Twice during the next five minutes his anxious gobbling boomed through the small patch of woods. I kept silent and waited. Several minutes later the silence was again broken by a loud gobble, only 20 yards to my left and over the ridge.

I slowly turned to the left, figuring the gobbler was circling me. I was hardly surprised by this maneuver, but I didn't expect him to circle along the steep cliff hillside. As I turned to my left, I started

to slide down the slope. I froze in an awkward position and realized with dismay that the gobbler was flanking me to the left — one of the worst things that could happen to a left-handed shooter.

I raised my shotgun and waited, trying my best to ignore a painful cramp that was developing in my side. The gobbler suddenly poked his head out of the brush about 25 yards in front of me and to my left. I was hopelessly out of position for a shot. My only chance was that the gobbler would not see me. The big tom stared at me for about 15 long seconds, and then he disappeared.

I waited a good minute before turning to my left and getting into a prone position. It was all in vain, however. The turkey had vanished. A quick look over the ridge showed there was a small shelf on

I froze in an awkward position and realized with dismay that the gobbler was flanking me to my left — one of the worst things for a left-handed shooter.

the inside rim of the gorge that the bird had used to flank me.

I headed for home feeling the bitter-sweet combination of disappointment and satisfaction. I hadn't gotten a shot, but I had finally called one in. Even though the gobbler had won this round, something told me I would get another chance.

The second Saturday of the season found me in the woods a half-hour before legal shooting time. I was set up near my previous encounter but at a spot with more large trees for cover and better visibility. Several hoots on my barred owl call got no response so I settled in to wait.

Unwilling

At 5:40 a.m. I heard a gobble about a half-mile to my right. A second gobble confirmed that the bird was on top of the ridge above me. I tried a variety of calls, but although he would answer, the bird seemed unwilling to move in my direction.

About eight o'clock I decided to get closer to the bird. I found a spot among some deadfalls that gave me a good view of the ravine. Several yelps from my trusted diaphragm call got a quick response. The gobbler sounded about 200 yards away and on the other side of the ravine.

Playing cat and mouse for the next two hours, I got him to within 100 yards of me, but I just couldn't coax him those last few yards to my side of the ravine. I knew it would be foolish for me to try to get any closer to him. At 10:30 I headed home,

hoping the old boy would still be around next week for a third go-around.

The third Saturday I was out at 5:15 and the morning broke cool and clear. My owl hoots went unanswered, so I was sitting tight, waiting to see what would happen. At 5:40, just like clockwork, I heard a gobble. It came from the other side of the ravine, about a quarter-mile away. I waited about five minutes before making some soft tree calls. I got no response.

Half an hour later I heard two more gobbles, but they still sounded about a quarter-mile away. I responded with a series of yelps, and it was answered immediately.

I decided against crossing the ravine because I hadn't received permission to hunt the farm adjoining my neighbor's property. I know the other farmer and had received permission to hunt on his farm in the past, but because I hadn't discussed it with him in advance, I decided against venturing over there unannounced.

Left with the option of having to entice the gobbler across the ravine, I decided to play coy and hard to get. I remained quiet for 20 minutes, during which time the gobbler sounded off twice. He was coming my way. My next series of calls went unanswered. I waited, hoping the bird hadn't spooked.

After half an hour I was beginning to have some doubts, but then the quiet solitude of the woods was broken by a loud gobble only 100 yards away. My heart was racing when I responded with my next short series of yelps. Instead of the expected gobble, however, this time my yelps were answered by hen yelps.

What kind of so-and-so would try to call a turkey away from another hunter, I thought to myself. There wasn't much I could do but wait. Soon I heard several more short yelps, then several cackles and some clucking. This wasn't another hunter, I realized. The noise was coming from real hens.

I SLOWLY TURNED to the left, figuring the gobbler was circling me. I was hardly surprised by the maneuver, but I didn't expect him to circle along the cliff.



I quietly shifted into position, making sure I wouldn't startle the approaching birds. I refrained from doing any more calling.

The hens continued to cluck and occasionally let out a cackle. I mentally noted the sound and rhythm of their calling so I could try to make my own calling sound more natural. Gradually, the hen symphony dwindled to silence.

Not wanting to risk spooking this small flock, I waited about five minutes and then gave a short soft yelp and several clucks. "Gobble-obble-obble," came the quick response.

Flicker of Movement

Directly in front of me, about 15 yards away, was a patch of brush stretching perhaps 20 yards along the edge of the hill. A flicker of movement caught my eye on the far right side of the brush. It was one of the hens. Another hen was clucking just out of sight on the other side. I held perfectly still with my eyes riveted on the first hen, which was cautiously stepping toward me about 35 yards away.

Suddenly, without warning, he appeared. The gobbler materialized from the same point where the first hen had appeared. He fanned his tail, puffed up his chest and strutted about four or five paces. I was sure my pounding heart was going to give me away. The gobbler turned and took a few steps, putting himself just outside my view.

With the hen directly in front of me, I waited nervously for just the right moment to raise my shotgun. I watched as the turkey turned and retraced her steps toward the gobbler. Clucking occasionally, the second hen continued to remain out of sight.

When the first hen stepped behind some brush, I slowly eased the shotgun to my shoulder. I was hoping the gobbler didn't amble off in the other direction. I estimated the distance to be 35 to 40 yards,

AS I HOISTED the bird onto my shoulder, I reflected on what a great season it had been. I had worked three gobblers in as many Saturdays.

which I knew to be approaching the maximum range for my full-choke barrel and the BBx4 Duplex load I was using. (Ed. note: Current regulations allow shot sizes no larger than No. 4 lead or No. 2 steel.) If he moved any farther I'd have to pass up the shot.

The hen, for some reason, decided she had seen enough of this side of the valley and retraced her steps back down the hill. That left just me and the gobbler. Apparently he decided that two hens in hand are better than one in the bush because he suddenly reappeared and took two halting steps back toward the hill. As he stopped in full view, I could see the long beard sticking out from his swelled chest. I steadied the front bead on his head and squeezed the trigger.

Hoisting the heavy bird in one hand and my unloaded shotgun in the other, I began my ascent up the steep incline. The rush of adrenaline from the past half-hour enabled me to zigzag my way up the hill with surprising ease.

On the way home it dawned on me that I had worked three gobblers on my three Saturday hunts in this, my third spring season. I guess the old saying is true: The third time really is the charm.



Off the Fence

York Audubon Society members pitch in to revive a local wetland, proving that grassroots commitment and effort can make a difference.

By Gloria Sue Westlund

WETLAND protection is one of today's most critical environmental concerns, but the problem is so widespread and the solutions so complex that it can be, in many respects, overwhelming. Anxious to do something constructive, however, the York Audubon Society chapter took on an ambitious restoration project designed to protect a local wetland.

This particular wetland, consisting of a 4-acre marsh and a half-acre pond, is located in East Manchester Township less than a mile from the Susquehanna River. It is located in what geologists call the Triassic Uplands. These uplands are generally lower than their surrounding uplands because of the underlying soft, easily erodible red shale and sandstone. The rocks most common in

the Triassic Upland — and the rocks underlying this wetland — are known as the New Oxford Formation.

This formation does not typically yield large amounts of water, but it often has enough water for some domestic uses. Even though these rocks are fairly permeable, the rock material lying on top of them contains a high percentage of clay — limiting seepage and allowing the wetland to exist.

Interestingly, the New Oxford Formation was formed 200 million years ago from sediments that had eroded from ancient highlands into a forested marshy wetland. As evidenced by fossils found in the area, what was once a wetland home for prehistoric reptiles is, at least in part, again a wetland home for today's reptiles.

In the 1960s, an earthen dam was built across the stream valley to hold water for a gravel washing operation. The



DICK HUMBERT of the York Audubon chapter works on a wetland fence with the help of youth volunteers. The fence keeps cattle from eating plants that make the area desirable to wildlife. Landowner cooperation was vital to the project's success.

dam resulted in a deep 10-acre pond. But in 1972, during Hurricane Agnes, the dam was breached. It was never rebuilt, and a lush 4-acre marsh and small pond evolved in its place, hosting plenty of cattails, rushes, sedges and other wetland vegetation.

Sora rails nested in the marsh and used the cattails and rushes for building and concealing their nests. Ducks, grebes, bitterns and other animals also used the wetland plants for nesting materials and sites.

Then came the drought of 1991, which dried out the marsh and, unfortunately, all the plant life on a neighboring 40-acre livestock pasture. Hungry, the cattle went to the wetland and either ate or trampled all the cattails and most of the sedges and rushes.

When Dick Humbert, one of the founders of York Audubon, saw the destruction, he immediately contacted the landowner, Jessie Wolf Sherrill. He suggested to Sherrill, who leased the land for cattle grazing, that the wetland should be fenced in order to protect the vegetation from future grazing.

A staunch conservationist and an advocate of wetlands protection, Sherrill immediately gave Humbert permission to

fence the wetland and the woods next to the marsh.

When Humbert proposed the restoration project to the York Audubon chapter, many members volunteered their time and resources to save the wetland. Humbert spent more than a week making 110 posts from locust trees taken from a nearby woods.

Next, volunteers walked the perimeter of the area to mark where each post had to be placed. After the posts were in place, workers went back to mark where the wire was to be attached.

Anybody who remembers last year's wet spring can easily imagine how the workers, clad in hip boots, must have struggled through the marsh. Any second thoughts they may have had, however, quickly vanished when, while working on the project one day, chapter president Rusty Ryan spotted a bald eagle sitting in a nearby tree.

Everybody involved with the restoration project was amazed at how quickly the cattails, rushes and sedges returned once the fence was finished. And once the vegetation became established, the wildlife came back, too.

But the club didn't stop there. Members also erected two wood duck

boxes (which were occupied almost immediately), five bluebird houses and a purple martin house. With help from Pleasureville's Boy Scout Troop 62, they also planted 75 trees and shrubs.

The trees and shrubs were planted on the breast of the original dam as buffer strips to control erosion and in areas to provide wildlife food and cover. The following trees and shrubs were planted: four weeping willows, 20 Streamco willows, 10 serviceberries, 10 gray-stem dogwoods, 14 silky dogwoods, four red barberries, four black cherries, four Rem red bush honeysuckles and four bittersweets.

By no means finished, the York Audubon chapter plans to plant duck potato, duckweed, cardinal flower, joe-pye weed and other herbaceous plants to provide food for waterfowl and other birds.

York Audubon's projects demonstrates that concerned individuals can make significant contributions to natural resource protection and conservation. For her contribution to this project, the group presented Sherrill its Conservation Award.

The author is conservation chairman for the York Audubon Society.



FIELD NOTES



An Original

BRADFORD COUNTY — I was giving a talk on the history of the Game Commission, and I was wearing an original uniform. As I told the audience about the 1929 outfit, a woman raised her hand and asked me if I had been issued it new. — WCO William A. Bower, Troy.



Don't Get 'Em Started

SULLIVAN COUNTY — As the sun begins to warm the earth and the snow melts, bears begin to stir. Hungry after the long winter, they begin to roam in search of food. When they don't find natural ones, they begin to cause trouble for humans. If you don't leave out any trash or other potential food source now, you likely won't have bear problems in the summer. — WCO Barry R. Hambley, Laporte.

Oats Aplenty

CLARION COUNTY — I'd like to thank Harris Drebbelbis for donating 1,000 bushels of oats to be planted on game lands. His generosity is appreciated by the Commission, and by the wildlife that benefits from his actions. — WCO Alan Scott, New Bethlehem.

Vehicles Bring Destruction

CARBON COUNTY — State game lands are closed to all motorized vehicles, with the exception that snowmobiles may be operated only on lands posted open to them. Our resources simply cannot endure the damage and loss caused by the operation of vehicles on game lands and their roads and trails. These restrictions are in place to help stop erosion, loss of habitat and stress to wildlife. They also make the lands more enjoyable to wildlife enthusiasts. — WCO Richard E. Karper, Weatherly.

Air Traffic Control

WESTMORELAND COUNTY — At a traffic light on Route 119 south of Greensburg, a number of motorists were treated to a rare sight. While we were waiting for the light to change, a house wren flew across the intersection with a sharp-shinned hawk in hot pursuit. The birds made contact and fell to the pavement. I got out and held up traffic until the struggling sharpie made off with its prey. When the light changed, everyone waited until the hawk got airborne. — WCO Joseph V. Stefko, Greensburg.

Whew

SUSQUEHANNA COUNTY — I left a Montrose sporting goods store with a box of 1992 license applications. But I absently-mindedly set them on the hood of my vehicle and drove off. When I got home and realized they were missing, I did some checking. I learned an elderly woman had found the box and had promptly taken it back to the store, whereupon she sternly lectured owner Martha Janoski. Martha never did mention that it was my fault. Thanks, Martha. I owe you one. — WCO Charles J. Arcovitch, Kingsley.



Recycle Hound

WYOMING COUNTY — Rod Azar of Tunkhannock taught his golden retriever to fetch beverage cans from the kitchen. Unfortunately, Rod may have trained the dog too thoroughly because every time they go afield the retriever scours the countryside for discarded cans. Rod is considering bringing a trash bag along on their next hunt. — WCO William Wasserman, Tunkhannock.

Ospreys for Moraine

In a cooperative restoration effort between the Game Commission, the Moraine Preservation Fund and DER's Bureau of State Parks, 16 ospreys will be hacked each year at Moraine State Park through 1995. The Moraine Preservation Fund, a nonprofit group composed of volunteers, welcomes any assistance the sportsmen and women have to offer. — LMO Ned Weston, West Sunbury.

Lightning Response

ALLEGHENY COUNTY — On the last day of the late rabbit season, Deputies Bob McGinnis and Dale McCullough were patrolling Settler's Cabin Park when they heard shots. Investigating, they found several people hunting rabbits in a safety zone without permission. I would liked to have seen the homeowner's expression when, as he called police, he looked out to see two uniformed officers standing in his front yard citing the violators. — WCO Edward B. Steffan, Pittsburgh.

Thanks, Larry

MONTGOMERY COUNTY — I always wanted to be a "game warden," and when I look back I realize I'm a WCO today because of retired Pike County WCO Larry Kuznar. I was his deputy for 10 years and learned everything I could. As long as I'm with the Commission, tales of Larry will live on. I only hope that one day I can be as much an inspiration to someone as Larry was to me. — WCO Robert W. Johnson, East Greenville.

Hard Luck Story

PERRY COUNTY — I ran into a man in a local store whom I'd arrested several nights earlier for killing one deer and attempting to kill a second. He'd been fined \$1,100. He was very upset — he'd just hit a deer with his vehicle, resulting in \$700 in damages. He wanted to know what the Game Commission was going to do about it, and I listened up to the point where he wanted the \$700 taken off his fine. — WCO James L. Brown, Loysville.



Prickly Situation

ADAMS COUNTY — Someone brought a porcupine to local taxidermist Jerry Neiderer for mounting. Jerry put the animal in a thin plastic bag and stored it in the freezer. Unfortunately, he forgot to tell his wife, and she accidentally bumped into it while rummaging through the freezer. It's a good thing they have a strong marriage. — WCO Larry Haynes, Gettysburg.

You Can Run, But . . .

My wife and I took a cruise to the Bahamas, and while I was relaxing on the ship's deck a passenger came up to me. "I know you. I saw your picture in *Game News*; you work for the Pennsylvania Game Commission." You can't hide anywhere anymore. — LMO Chester J. Harris, Milan.



Filters

CENTRE COUNTY — While working a beaver complaint I learned firsthand just how well these dams act as stream filters. The water behind the dam appeared clear and unpolluted, but when I kicked a hole in the dam to lower the water level, I could immediately see and smell sulfur and other pollutants. — WCO Jack Weaver, Bellefonte.

Tough Time for Farmers

SOMERSET COUNTY — Many people have noticed the large quantities of corn and soybeans that weren't harvested last year. While that's great for wildlife, it's devastating for farmers — especially following on the heels of the '91 drought. It'd be a nice gesture if this spring and summer hunters stopped by the farms they hunt and offered to help with the chores for a few hours. It would be a great way to show our appreciation for allowing us to hunt on their properties. — WCO Clifford E. Guindon, Jr., Boswell.

Good Ethics Remain

McKEAN COUNTY — The drop in fur prices has caused a decrease in the number of furtakers, but those who are still at it say they enjoy the sport more. It seems that much of the competition and thievery has almost vanished from trapping, and a stronger feeling of camaraderie has evolved. The trappers I talked to had the same good ethics even back when prices were high — they are the best of the bunch in both behavior and skill. I hope all furtakers can follow these good examples. — WCO John P. Dzemyan, Smethport.

Good Camo

HUNTINGDON COUNTY — Last fall I was hunting waterfowl over decoys. As the sun rose, two wood ducks came in from behind and landed among the decoys before I could get a shot; they shortly disappeared into thick marsh grass. A few minutes later I heard the sound of wings and saw a bird's silhouette on the bow of my canoe. I waited tensely for ducks to approach the decoys when I felt a large bird land on my head. It stayed there for a few seconds before flying off. It was a Cooper's hawk that apparently mistook my cap for a piece of wood sticking up from the marsh. — WCO Phil Lukish, Alexandria.

Missing Chances

ELK COUNTY — The Commission puts a lot of time and effort into publishing the hunting and trapping digest that comes with each hunting and furtaking license. The intent is to give sportsmen a full understanding of the agency's rules and regulations, but sometimes even our best efforts result in confusion. Last year two local hunters passed up the chance at a coyote because they misread the digest, which says you may shoot a coyote in deer season provided you have a valid, unused deer tag. One hunter explained his interpretation by saying, "I'll be darned if I'm going to waste my deer tag on a blankety-blank coyote." — WCO Richard S. Bodenhorn, Ridgway.

Worlds Apart

MONROE COUNTY — Two encounters with first-time hunters last deer season stand out in my mind. In the first, a young hunter and his father discovered two bucks that had been shot prior to the season. They field-dressed the animals, reported their find, and dragged the deer to the road for officers to pick up. The second involved a 12-year-old who'd killed his first buck. He and his father had hidden the untagged deer in the trunk of a car. We teach ethics in our hunter-ed classes, but it's up to the parents to be the role models and the real teachers. — WCO Thomas M. Smith, Bartonsville.



Please Fence Me In

LANCASTER COUNTY — The Young Farmers Association asked me to give a lecture on streambank fencing, which I did. I applauded their interest in this vital program, and I was encouraged to see they have the foresight to realize streambank fencing may become a standard practice in the future. In many instances, farmers enrolled in our cooperative access programs can have their streams fenced for nothing — even the labor is supplied. Interested cooperators should contact their respective Game Commission region office for details. — WCO Linda L. Swank, Quarryville.

Cold Cuts

Few people appreciate the dedication of our Food & Cover Corps. Back in February, crews from Columbia and Northumberland counties finished a special woodland cutting designed to improve or create habitat for grouse and deer. To accomplish the task, the men had to brave icy roads and frigid, below-zero temperatures. I'd like to thank Ken Wright, Dick Dunkelberger, Dave Davidson, Bob Spang, Steve Fester, Ron Haas, Derl Reed and Rick Penman for their commitment to wildlife and a job well done. — LMO Keith P. Sanford, Mifflinville.

Dreaming of Horses

PHILADELPHIA COUNTY — Philadelphia police rely on me and my deputies to dispatch injured deer because department policy prohibits them from doing it. When a horse was hit by a car in the early morning hours, the police dispatcher called Deputy Stephen Landis — waking him from a sound sleep. Steve told the dispatcher the Commission doesn't handle domestic animals and went back to sleep. Later that morning, Steve began to wonder if he'd dreamed the whole incident, but a call to the police confirmed he hadn't. — WCO Richard J. Shire, Philadelphia.

Is It Worth It?

CLINTON COUNTY — Thanks to a concerned sportsman and quick work by Deputies Bill McCoy and Rick Macklem, two father/son teams were arrested in illegal deer cases. In one case, the duo attempted to kill a deer in closed season, and in the other case a deer was killed in closed season. The cases occurred a half-mile and about two hours apart. The son in one case had been arrested in 1991 for illegally taking a deer. I wonder if the fathers were teaching their sons how to become successful poachers. The fines in these cases totaled \$2,650, and each individual lost his hunting and trapping privileges for three years. — WCO R.W. Norbeck, Mill Hall.



Setting It Straight

UNION COUNTY — I want to clear up a few misconceptions some people have. The Game Commission has not traded turkeys to any state or province in return for coyotes. We have not stocked coyotes in the state to help control the deer herd. Some naturally occurring coyotes, however, have been fitted with radio telemetry collars to help us learn more about this interesting and controversial animal. — WCO Bernie Schmader, Millmont.

Ill-Fated Move

MERCER COUNTY — I recently picked up a roadkilled bear, which is a rare occurrence here. Only four bears were taken by hunters last year, although the population seems to be expanding. I was curious why the 107-pound young male was on the move in early February. The bear was killed on a cold, clear night, and there was still snow cover on the ground. — WCO Donald C. Chaybin, Greenville.

Clean Up Your Act

CHESTER COUNTY — Litter is obvious along roads and fields after the snows have melted. Some of it is wind-blown trash from around homes, and some of it is deposited by passing motorists and careless haulers. Commonly, trash is blown out of the beds of pickups — unbeknownst to the drivers. Drivers are legally responsible for litter, regardless of how it gets there. Dispose of your trash properly. — WCO S.D. Bernardi, Atglen.

Billboards Send Anti-Fur Message

ERIE COUNTY — An anti-trapping group recently sponsored billboard ads here that denounce trapping and wearing fur. I've attempted to talk to the group, but no one seems interested in hearing my views. If they think they're helping wildlife with this kind of advertising, they're mistaken. When will these people learn that hunters and trappers are not wildlife's enemies? — WCO Wayne Lugaila, Waterford.

No More Excuses

The administrators at Lakeview High School must appreciate the wholesome value of hunting. Students are allowed to select two days they'd like to hunt, and then a permission form is signed by their parents and all their teachers. The system allows kids to make up the work they missed. Sure beats the old days when we had to develop bogus illnesses for Mom to put on our excuse slips. — LMO James Deniker, Sandy Lake.

Outstanding

VENANGO COUNTY — Kevin and Bob Moon, Jr., were recently honored as the Outstanding Hunter-Trapper Education Instructors of the Year for 1992 in the Northwest Region. They have made invaluable contributions in promoting furtaking and hunting ethics, along with combating anti-trapping sentiment. Their message goes to many schools and Scout groups, in addition to their hunter-ed classes. — WCO Leo Yahner, Franklin.

Adaptable

BUTLER COUNTY — Many wild animals learn to adapt to people, as trapper Ronald Vangrutenbruel can attest. While tending his land sets for beaver, Ronald noticed a large beaver only 10 yards behind him in the water. The animal stuck around until Ronald finished his set, then it quietly disappeared. Although the trapper was encouraged by the sighting, he never did catch the beaver. Perhaps it was watching Ron to learn what to look for. — WCO Art Brunst, Portersville.

Archery season set at 6 weeks

AT ITS APRIL 5-6 meeting, the Game Commission approved a package of 1993-94 hunting and trapping seasons and bag limits that includes a six-week fall archery deer season, the longest in state history.

Dozens of archers from around the state packed the auditorium at the Harrisburg headquarters to show their support for the longer season. A number of them, including nationally renowned whitetail expert Dave Samuels and music star Ted Nugent, testified before the Commission on behalf of an additional two weeks. The bow season for white-tailed deer will open Oct. 2 and continue through Nov. 13.

New regulations require archers to have a county-specific antlerless deer license in order to harvest an antlerless deer. In the past, archers could harvest one deer of either sex, anywhere in the state.

The Commission's new regulatory deer management package includes changes in the antlerless deer license. Starting this year, all antlerless licenses will have their own ear tags and big game harvest report cards. Now the holder of an antlerless license can harvest an antlerless deer, using that specific tag, and also have the opportunity to harvest a buck using the tag on his or her regular hunting license.

During the period of the archery season that overlaps with small game and turkey seasons (Oct. 30 – Nov. 13), bowhunters will be required to display 250 square inches of fluorescent orange on the head, chest and back combined.

Seasons and bag limits approved for the upcoming license year are similar to those of past years with the exception of changes in pheasant hunting. Six areas of the state, designated as Pheasant Restoration Study sites, will be closed to pheasant hunting. These tracts are located in portions of Erie, Crawford, Centre, Juniata, Northumberland, Montour, Columbia, Dauphin and Schuylkill counties.

A portion of Mercer County, closed to pheasant hunting during a hybrid pheasant study program in recent years, will be

reopened on a limited basis. In that area of Mercer County west of I-79 and north of I-80, hunters will be able to harvest one cock pheasant per day with a field possession limit of two from Oct. 30 to Nov. 5.

An allocation of 748,000 antlerless deer licenses was approved for the 1993-94 antlerless deer seasons. In approving allocations, Commissioners granted the executive office the option of lowering individual county numbers, pending field reports on winter losses.

The 1993-94 antlerless license allocation is 31,350 more than a year ago. It is designed to reduce the state's deer herd about 6.6 percent through a harvest of from 190,000 to 240,000.

The Commission also:

- ♦ Gave preliminary approval to reclassify the coyote as a "furbearer." It's currently listed as a "protected mammal."
- ♦ Approved a \$1,500 grant to the state FFA Foundation for expenses resulting from the state team's travel to the national FFA convention.
- ♦ Opened about six miles of game lands roads from the archery season opener to the closing day of muzzleloader season for sportspeople who possess a "disabled persons permit." The roads are located on SGL 210, 1.4 miles; SGL 59, 2.4 miles; and SGL 37, 2.1 miles.
- ♦ Approved the purchase of eight properties totaling 1,867 acres in Berks, Bradford, Greene, Lawrence, McKean, Mifflin, Somerset and Washington counties for a sum of \$752,050.



Deer scent use clarified

A recent Game Commission administrative directive addresses the use of commercial scents for deer hunting.

"Scents and lures do not constitute a food stuff or nutritive supplement [such as bait piles or mineral blocks]. Instead, they serve only to attract the attention of game similar to duck or

turkey calling, and antler rattling.

"Therefore, scents or lures that are used for white-tailed deer should not be interpreted as 'bait' . . . Individuals using such substances should not be prosecuted for their use.

"The use of scents or lures for the hunting of black bear is prohibited."

Deer harvests fall within predictions

Hunters harvested 361,224 deer during the 1992-93 seasons. Based on big game report cards filed by successful hunters, reporting rates and other data, last season's harvest included 163,159 bucks and 198,065 antlerless deer.

According to the Bureau of Wildlife Management, the figures fall in line with preseason estimates of 130,000 to 160,000 bucks and 180,000 to 230,000 antlerless deer.

The deep snow that covered much of the state at the tail end of buck

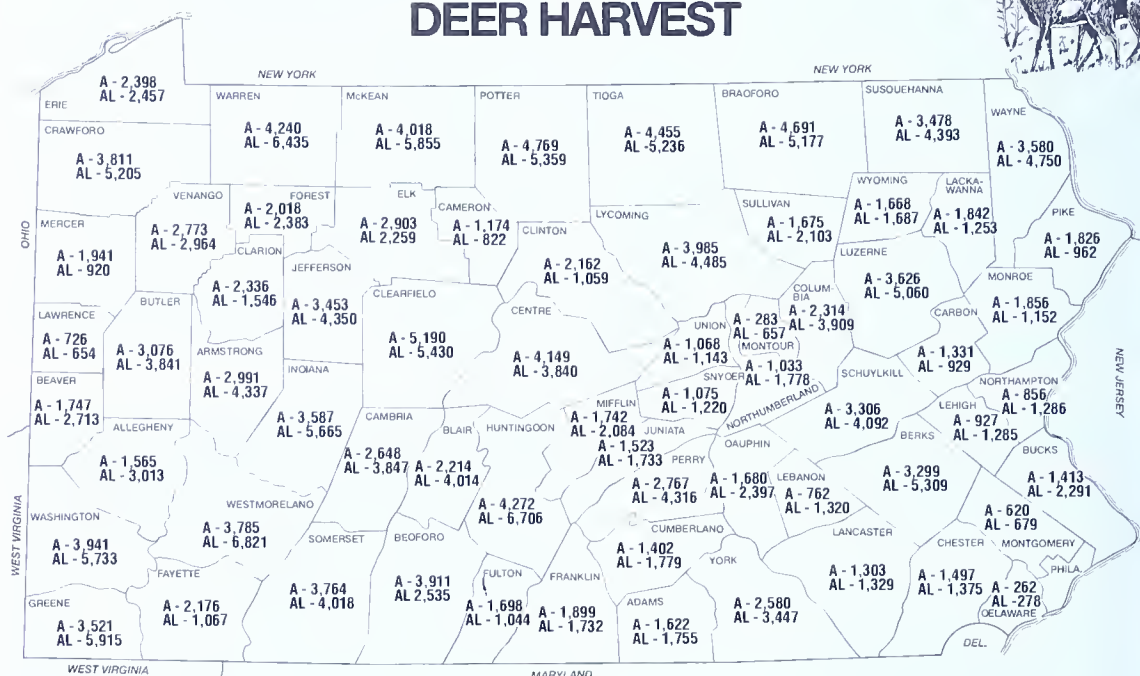
season and throughout the antlerless season certainly had an impact on the 1992-93 harvest. The snow hampered hunter access and movement, and the antlerless season was extended by a day in 21 counties — nearly a third of the state.

"Because of the weather conditions, we didn't get the antlerless harvest we were looking for in some areas," said Commission Biologist Bill Palmer.

"However, from a management

PENNSYLVANIA GAME COMMISSION

1992 DEER HARVEST



standpoint, the overall harvest still fell within an acceptable range. We're satisfied with the result."

Palmer pointed out that the one-day antlerless season extension produced an additional harvest of about 11 percent. The extension proved to be critical in terms of keeping the agency's deer management program on track.

Last season's buck harvest was a marked increase over the 1991-92 harvest of 149,598. All but eight counties posted increases in buck kill.

Besides weather, another limiting factor in the 1992-93 antlerless harvest was an allocation of 716,650

antlerless licenses, down from a record 847,200 the season before.

Clearfield County led the state in buck harvest with 5,190. Potter was second with 4,769, followed by Bradford, 4,691; Tioga, 4,455; and Huntingdon, 4,272.

Westmoreland County ranked first in antlerless harvest with 6,821. Huntingdon was second with 6,706, followed by Warren, 6,435; Greene, 5,915; and McKean, 5,855.

Leading counties in combined harvest were Huntingdon, 10,978; Warren, 10,675; Clearfield, 10,620; Westmoreland, 10,606; and Potter, 10,128.

Commission to issue Potter, Philly 'doe' tags

Applications for the 18,550 antlerless deer licenses and potential bonus tags available in Potter County will be handled through the Game Commission's Northcentral Region office in Jersey Shore. When addressing the official pink envelope, black out "County Treasurer" pre-printed on the front and write Pennsylvania Game Commission, P.O. Box 5038, Jersey Shore, PA 17740. Make checks payable to the Pennsylvania Game Commission.

Applications for Philadelphia County's 500 antlerless permits will be handled through the Commission's Southeast Region office in Reading. Black out "County Treasurer" on the official envelope and write Pennsylvania Game Commission, RD 2, Box 2584, Reading, PA 19605. Checks should be made payable to the Pennsylvania Game Commission.

Agency solicits logo ideas

The Commission is sponsoring a contest to solicit ideas for a new logo, one that perhaps will better reflect its wildlife management role. The agency is considering a possible logo change in 1995, contingent on final approval by the Commissioners.

The contest, limited to Pennsylvania residents, will award cash prizes to the top three concepts: \$500 to first place, \$250 to second and \$100 to third. Commonwealth employees and their immediate families are not eligible.

There are few contest guidelines because the agency is looking for a concept, not necessarily a finished design, and it wants to allow artists a lot of creative latitude. Entries must

fit on an 8½ x 11 sheet of paper. Artists may use any medium to convey their ideas; submissions may be color or black and white.

Entries must be postmarked by Sept. 1, 1993. Participants must place their name, address and telephone number on the *back* of each entry. Contestants who wish their artwork returned must include a self-addressed stamped envelope — no other submissions will be returned. Judging will take place this fall, and winners will be notified upon final selection.

Send entries to PGC Logo Contest, 2001 Elmerton Ave., Harrisburg, PA 17110-9797. For additional information, write the above address or call (717) 787-3745.

1993-94 Seasons and Bag Limits

At its April meeting in Harrisburg, the Pennsylvania Game Commission established the following seasons and bag limits for resident game and furbearers for the 1993-94 hunting license year: July 1, 1993, through June 30, 1994.

Open seasons include first and last dates listed, Sundays excepted, for game. Shooting hours are from one-half hour before sunrise until sunset — except during the spring gobbler season when the times are one-half hour before sunrise until noon. Raccoons may be hunted any hour except during the firearms deer seasons when the hours are from sunset to one-half hour before sunrise. Woodchucks, coyotes, opossums, skunks and weasels may not be hunted before noon during the spring gobbler season. Seasons and shooting hours for migratory birds will be announced later.

		Daily Limit	Field Possession Limit
SMALL GAME			
Squirrels: gray, black, red and fox (combined)	Oct. 16 – Nov. 27 Dec. 27 – Jan. 22	6	12
Ruffed grouse (statewide) ¹ (statewide) (in 55 counties) ²	Oct. 16 – Nov. 27 Dec. 27 – Jan. 1 Jan. 3 – 22	2	4
Rabbits , cottontail	Oct. 30 – Nov. 27 Dec. 27 – Jan. 22	4	8
Ring-necked pheasants , males only (except in designated area) ³ Either-sex in designated area	Oct. 30 – Nov. 27 Dec. 27 – Jan. 22	2	4
Males only in that portion of Mercer County west of I-79 and north of I-80	Oct. 30 – Nov. 5	1	2
Bobwhite quail (in 54 counties) ⁴	Oct. 30 – Nov. 27	4	8
California or Valley quail only in Allegheny, Beaver and Washington counties	No closed season [#]	Unlimited	
Woodchucks (no Sunday hunting)	No closed season [#]	Unlimited	
Crows (Fridays, Saturdays, Sundays only)	July 2 – Nov. 28 Dec. 31 – April 3	Unlimited	
Snowshoe hares (varying hares)	Dec. 27 – Jan. 1	Daily Limit 2	Season Limit 4
		Daily Limit	Season Limit
BIG GAME			
Fall Turkey (Management Areas 2-A, 2-B) (Management Areas 3,4,5,6,7 & 8) (Management Area 9) (Management Area 1 is closed except locations east of I-79 and south of I-90 in Crawford and Erie counties; that section open Oct. 30 – Nov. 6)	Oct. 30 – Nov. 6 Oct. 30 – Nov. 13 Closed	1	1
Spring Gobbler (bearded birds, statewide)	April 30 – May 28	1	1
Bear	Nov. 22 – 24	1	1
Deer Archery, antlered, or antlerless with appropriate license	Oct. 2 – Nov. 13		
Regular, Antlered	Nov. 29 – Dec. 11		
Regular, Antlerless	Dec. 13 – 15		

1993-94 Seasons and Bag Limits (continued)

Deer (cont.)

Late Archery/Flintlock	Dec. 27 – Jan. 8
Antlerless — Special Regulations Areas ⁵	Nov. 29 – Dec. 18
	Dec. 27 – Jan. 22
Antlerless — Deer Damage Areas	Dec. 27 – Jan. 22

FURBEARERS — HUNTING

		Daily Limit	Season Limit
Raccoon and Fox	Oct. 13 – Feb. 20 [#]	Unlimited	
Coyote, Opossum, Skunk, Weasel	No closed season [#]	Unlimited	

FURBEARERS — TRAPPING

Raccoon, Fox, Opossum, Skunk, Weasel, Coyote	Oct. 13 – Feb. 20	Unlimited	
Mink and Muskrat	Nov. 25 – Jan. 9	Unlimited	
Beaver	Dec. 18 – Jan. 23		
Zones 1,2,3 (see Hunting and Trapping Digest) with the following exception		10	10
Bradford, Susquehanna and Wayne counties		10	40
Zones 4,5,6		6	6

NO OPEN SEASON — All other wildlife species

NO CLOSED SEASON — European starlings and English sparrows

Special Regulations

¹ Grouse hunting prohibited on designated portion of SGL 176, Centre County.

² Grouse hunting permitted Jan. 3 – 22 in all counties except Berks, Bedford, Butler, Centre, Clarion, Dauphin, Fayette, Huntingdon, Indiana, McKean, Monroe and Susquehanna, where the season is closed.

³ Designated area for male and female pheasants — East of Ohio and north of Interstate 80 to Route 220, north of Route 220 from I-80 to Route 118, north of Routes 118 and 415 from Route 220 to Route 309, north and east of Route 309 from Route 118 to I-80, and north of I-80 from Route 309 to the New Jersey line.

⁴ Bobwhite quail hunting permitted Oct. 30 – Nov. 27 in all counties except Adams, Chester, Cumberland, Dauphin, Delaware, Franklin, Fulton, Juniata, Lancaster, Lebanon, Perry, Snyder and York, where the season is closed.

⁵ Special Regulations Areas — All of Allegheny, Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Montgomery and Philadelphia counties.

- Lawful for deer: Muzzleloading long guns; bow and arrows; manual or autoloading shotguns, 20-gauge or larger, slugs or buckshot only — except buckshot may not be used in Allegheny County. Buckshot is required in Ridley Creek and Tyler state parks.
- Lawful for small game, huntable furbearers and crows: Manually operated or autoloading shotguns plugged to three-shell capacity; shot no larger than No. 4 lead or No. 2 steel; manually operated .22 caliber rimfire rifles and handguns; and bow and arrow.
- Lawful for waterfowl: Manually operated or autoloading shotguns no larger than

10-gauge, plugged to three-shell capacity in chamber and magazine combined; only nontoxic shot no larger than T (.20 inches); bow and arrow.

- Lawful while trapping: manually operated .22 caliber rimfire rifles or handguns. (Persons under 12 must be accompanied by adult.)

*During the regular antlered and antlerless deer seasons, Nov. 29 – Dec. 11 and Dec. 13 – 15 respectively, and any extension thereof, it shall be unlawful to hunt any other wild bird or animal (except coyotes if the hunter has a valid, unused deer tag) from one-half hour before sunrise to sunset. Migratory waterfowl and game birds on regulated hunting grounds are excepted. Hunting during spring turkey season April 30 – May 28 for coyotes, opossums, skunks, weasels, groundhogs is prohibited before noon. With the exception of foxes and coyotes, furbearers may not be hunted on Sundays.

1993 Antlerless Allocations

County	Licenses	Expected Harvest	% Change*	County	Licenses	Expected Harvest	% Change*
Adams	9,650	2,441	-11.5	Lack.	7,300	2,244	-5.8
Allegheny	21,650	3,780	-63.0	Lancaster	9,000	1,783	-8.0
Armstrong	6,800	2,261	5.8	Lawrence	5,100	995	9.1
Beaver	10,000	2,385	-4.7	Lebanon	3,700	800	0
Bedford	13,450	4,495	0	Lehigh	7,100	1,424	-13.3
Berks	18,900	4,696	-18.3	Luzerne	16,550	4,119	-7.3
Blair	4,900	1,602	0	Lycoming	15,350	4,058	-8.7
Bradford	16,850	6,432	-6.4	McKean	18,100	7,460	-10.4
Bucks	19,350	3,058	-29.2	Mercer	9,900	3,089	-4.3
Butler	14,700	4,033	-4.6	Mifflin	9,250	2,269	-9.7
Cambria	6,800	2,570	0	Monroe	9,150	2,006	-2.5
Cameron	2,100	689	0	Montgom.	5,050	988	-8.2
Carbon	6,500	1,286	0	Montour	750	192	5.3
Centre	16,650	4,976	-5.9	Northamp.	3,750	664	6.1
Chester	14,500	2,774	-11.1	Northumb.	4,800	1,107	7.3
Clarion	13,400	4,180	-4.2	Perry	16,050	3,747	-16.9
Clearfield	18,500	7,621	-8.5	Philadelphia	500	—	—
Clinton	5,500	1,687	-1.4	Pike	9,000	1,967	-2.0
Columbia	12,850	3,634	-14.3	Potter	18,550	6,665	-4.0
Crawford	19,150	6,223	-23.4	Schuylkill	17,200	4,537	-9.5
Cumber.	9,300	1,881	-9.2	Snyder	5,550	1,324	-7.1
Dauphin	10,050	2,187	-4.8	Somerset	7,850	3,121	5.6
Delaware	2,600	481	-14.6	Sullivan	8,850	2,294	-15.6
Elk	7,550	2,828	0	Susq.	7,300	2,883	6.0
Erie	8,100	2,043	6.2	Tioga	22,000	7,175	-8.9
Fayette	7,500	2,201	5.9	Union	4,150	1,137	-4.0
Forest	10,950	3,852	-5.6	Venango	12,750	4,460	-5.7
Franklin	5,300	1,259	4.3	Warren	27,150	8,559	-6.5
Fulton	7,300	2,071	-3.0	Wash.	18,800	5,499	-3.9
Greene	14,300	5,981	-20.0	Wayne	13,300	4,862	-13.0
Hunting.	18,250	5,546	-13.5	Westmore.	10,700	3,349	0
Indiana	9,200	3,579	0	Wyoming	7,200	2,186	-4.4
Jefferson	17,250	5,961	-9.2	York	28,100	5,309	-26.8
Juniata	8,300	2,214	-14.7	TOTAL	748,000	215,180	-6.6

*Indicates the planned impact of the allocations on overwintering populations.

Winter goose hunters take 1,180

Pennsylvania's first late season hunt for resident Canada geese attracted more than 1,700 sportsmen to blinds on and along sections of the Susquehanna and Juniata rivers. Braving cold and sometimes wet conditions, hunters harvested an estimated 1,180 geese.

"We were looking for a harvest of somewhere around 1,000 geese, so the late season met our expectations," said Commission Biologist John Dunn. "The state's large resident flocks give us a chance to provide more opportunities for our waterfowlers — which is important, considering the downward trend of migrating geese."

The Commission issued just over 2,000 free permits for the Jan. 20 through Feb. 5 hunt; an estimated 83 percent of those who got permits actually hunted.

The success rate (harvesting at least one goose) was 27 percent, as determined by report cards returned to the Commission.

The hunt was held on and within five miles of parts of the Susquehanna and Juniata rivers. It was designed to take advantage of the large numbers

of nonmigratory, resident geese inhabiting the river systems.

Dauphin County topped the harvest list with 243 geese, followed by Perry, 199; and Northumberland, 160.

The winter hunt was the second experimental season held for resident geese this license year. A September season brought out 8,300 hunters; they accounted for a 47 percent success rate.

Both hunts were conducted under U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service guidelines which stipulated that not more than 20 percent of the harvest could be comprised of migratory geese. The early and late seasons both satisfied the criterion.

Based on the success of the two seasons, it's expected that USFWS will again grant the seasons for the 1993-94 license year. The Atlantic Flyway Council has already approved a Sept. 1-15 early resident goose season in southeast counties. USFWS adoption is expected next month.

Northwest hunters will get to hunt Sept. 1-10 as last year. Details of the early resident goose season will be published in the *July Game News*.

Eighth-grader's firearms project wins science fair

Megon L. Laudenslager, an eighth-grader at Susquehanna Township Middle School in Harrisburg, placed first in the school's science fair with a ballistics project.

Laudenslager produced a detailed display comparing how different powder charges affect bullet velocity and accuracy in a Remington .222. She loaded six different powder charges of 4895 and then tested the loads by firing groups and measuring velocity and trajectory.

Her project later won second place in the physics category of the Capital Area Science and Engineering Fair, in competition against more than 300 students from 51 central Pennsylvania schools.



Megon L. Laudenslager

Regions host youth field days

All six Commission regions are hosting Youth Field Days this summer. These field days are designed to expose young people to the outdoor sports and the natural world.

The following dates were available at press time. Watch "Conservation News" for further announcements.

NORTHWEST

Mercer — Grove City Sportsmen's Club, June 12; **Venango** — Venango County Fair Grounds, June 27; **Crawford** — Pymatuning Sportsmen's Club, July 17; **Clarion** — Camp Coffin, July 24; **Lawrence** — Castlewood Rod & Gun Club, Aug. 1; **Erie** — Gem City Sportsmen's Club, Aug. 22. Contact the region office at (800) 533-6764.

SOUTHWEST

Somerset — Turkeyfoot Fish & Game Association, July 17. **Beaver** —

Midland Sportsmen Club, July 24. Contact the region office at (800) 243-8519.

NORTHCENTRAL

Clinton — Southern Clinton County Sportsmen's Club, Sept. 11. Contact the region office at (800) 422-7551.

SOUTHCENTRAL

Cumberland — Carlisle Fish and Game Association, June 5. Contact the region office at (800) 422-7554.

NORTHEAST

To be announced.

SOUTHEAST

Dauphin — Harrisburg Hunters and Anglers, June 19. **Northampton** — Stockertown Rod and Gun Club, May 28. **Philadelphia** — Holmesburg Fish and Game, June 19. Contact the region office at (800) 228-0791.

Middle Creek, Pymatuning lectures underway

Lectures at the Middle Creek Wildlife Management Area Visitors Center, located near Kleinfeltersville, begin at 7:30 p.m.

Scheduled for the next several weeks are "The Miracles of Nature — A Walk Through the Year" by naturalist J. Carl Nolt, May 19-20; "Angling Opportunities in Pennsylvania" by Dave Wolf of the Fish and Boat

Commission, June 2-3; and "Undiscovered World of the Butterfly" by consulting naturalist Rick Mikula, June 16-17.

Lectures at the Pymatuning Wildlife Management Area Visitors Center, located near Linesville, begin at 2 p.m. Coming up is "Raptor Recovery" by Commission Biologist Dan Brauning, June 5.

PGC and Pymatuning Park hold junior naturalist program

The Game Commission and Pymatuning State Park are sponsoring a naturalist program for children ages 9 through 13.

The program offers kids the chance to learn about plants and animals, investigate streams, and hike through the woods.

There are four program dates; children must attend all four classes. The dates are June 10, 17, 24 and 29. Classes will begin at 10 a.m.

For more information, contact the Pymatuning Wildlife Management Area Visitors Center at (814) 683-5545.

PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES who require special assistance at Game Commission public functions should contact the telephone number listed with the announcement, the appropriate region office or the Harrisburg headquarters. Toll-free numbers for each region are listed in every issue of *Game News*; the Harrisburg number is (717) 787-4250.

COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
HUNTING LICENSE APPLICATION

(Certified Check or Money Order in US Currency Required for Mail Orders from Nonresidents)

LICENSE FEES ARE NOT REFUNDABLE
Check Type(s) Desired In Block

Agent Write In
Stamp Number

Agent Write In
Stamp Number

Res. Ad. (17-64 yrs.)	<input type="checkbox"/> \$12.75	Res. Ad. Furtaker	<input type="checkbox"/> \$12.75
Res. Jr. (12-16 yrs.)	<input type="checkbox"/> \$ 5.75	Res. Jr. Furtaker	<input type="checkbox"/> \$ 5.75
Res. Sr. (***65 yrs. & older)	<input type="checkbox"/> \$10.75	Res. ***Sr. Furtaker	<input type="checkbox"/> \$10.75
Nonres. (Hunt)	<input type="checkbox"/> \$80.75	Nonres. Ad. Furtaker	<input type="checkbox"/> \$80.75
Nonres. Jr. (Hunt)	<input type="checkbox"/> \$40.75	Nonres. Jr. Furtaker	<input type="checkbox"/> \$40.75
**Muzzleloader	<input type="checkbox"/> \$ 5.75	**(Cannot be purchased after July 31)	
Archery	<input type="checkbox"/> \$ 5.75	***Or will be 65 years old by December 31 of current license year.	

7-day Nonresident Small Game (Includes Waterfowl) Valid From _____ To _____ \$15.75

*Resident Disabled War Veterans Claim No. _____ Free ☐ Claim No. _____

ALL MAIL ORDERS — Add \$1.00 POSTAGE _____ Furtaker Backtag No. _____

*Available only from County Treasurers TOTAL _____ Hunting Backtag No. _____

PRINT PLAINLY

Name _____
(First) (Middle Initial) (Last) (Occupation)

Legal Residence _____
(Street or R.F.D.)

City _____ State _____
(Zip Code)

Phone No. () _____
(Area Code) (Official Use, PGC Only) (County of Residence)

Age _____ Color _____ Color _____
Hair _____ Eyes _____ Weight _____ Height _____

Date of Birth _____ Sex: ☐ Male ☐ Female

Place of Birth _____
(Post Office) (State) (Nation) Resident of Pennsylvania since _____

I present the following as evidence that I have completed the required education course or have held a prior hunting or furtaker license: or I am currently serving in the Armed Forces or Coast Guard or have been discharged under honorable conditions within 6 mo. of application.

Education Training Certificate or Military Papers _____
Date _____

A prior hunting or furtaker license from _____
(State or Nation) Year _____ License# _____

I am unable to produce a prior hunting or furtaker license, but certify below that I did hold a lawfully obtained hunting or furtaker license issued by _____
(State or Nation)

Agents Not Responsible for Licenses lost by Mailing.
Mail Application and correct amount of fee (Include \$1.00 postage for each application) to the **PENNSYLVANIA GAME COMMISSION, LICENSE DIVISION, 2001 ELMERTON AVENUE, HARRISBURG, PA. 17110-9797. (DO NOT SEND STAMPS).** All applicants must present proof of Hunter Education Training or prior hunting license. (Preferably a photostatic copy). 7-day Nonresident Small Game License not valid for turkey or big game. **Mail orders for Resident Hunting Licenses must include positive proof of residency in this Commonwealth.**

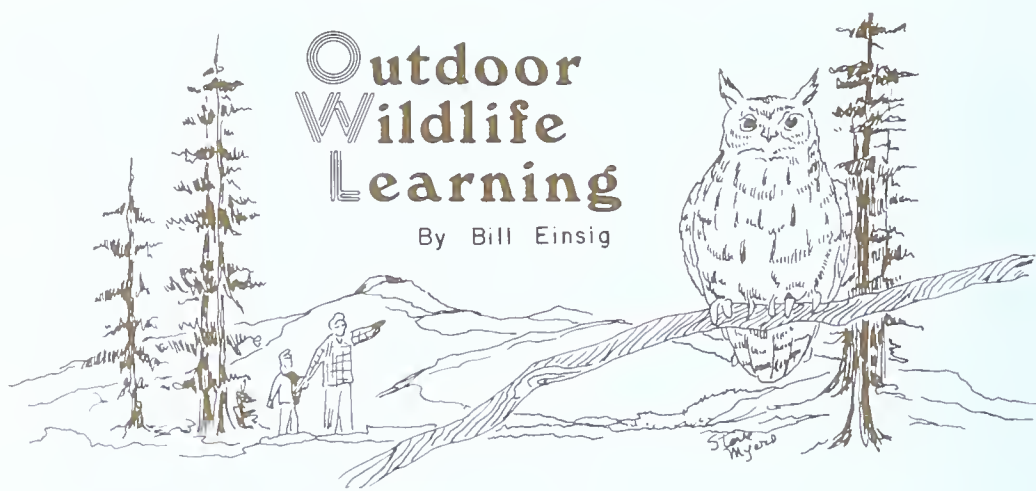
CERTIFICATION OF CORRECTNESS

I certify that all of the above information and documents presented are true and correct and that my hunting or trapping privileges are not revoked for this license year.

(X) _____
(Signature of Applicant plus parent or guardian for persons under age 17) (Date)

I hereby certify that applicant has properly identified himself/herself and in my opinion is entitled to license(s) listed.

Signature of Issuing Agent _____
(FORM OF ID USED)



ALLARM: Hands-On Science

THERE SHOULD be more to school science classes than memorizing terms and reciting fundamental laws and theories. Students of all ages need the experience of working as scientists work. They need to collect and analyze data, and understand how to build conceptual models that explain their results. Essentially, in addition to learning the language of science, students also need to learn the process of scientific investigation.

But it's not easy to involve entire classes in meaningful science projects. Other pressures often stand in the way of novel activities that actually get young people involved in true science. There are budgets to consider, time schedules to deal with and class sizes that are just too large for anything other than traditional methods.

Ironically, the curriculum itself frequently stands in the way of real-world research projects because it might require a certain amount of material to be covered in a certain period of time. Staying on schedule is a major objective for almost every teacher.

Fortunately, there are opportunities for real science work available to teachers who want to involve their classes in some scientific studies. One of those opportunities is available to nearly every science teacher in Pennsylvania, at very low cost and low commitment of classroom time, in the form of

ALLARM — the Alliance for Acid Rain Monitoring.

What is ALLARM?

ALLARM has operated as a citizen-action, non-profit organization since 1987. Dr. Candie Wilderman, associate professor of environmental science at Dickinson College, Carlisle, began the ALLARM project in order to obtain baseline data on the pH and alkalinity levels of streams across the state.

ALLARM's original focus was on the southcentral counties and that is still the region with the greatest number of volunteers and monitored streams. However, most of the state's counties have at least one stream being monitored.

Citizen volunteers agree to collect and analyze water samples from a stream or lake of their choice, on a weekly basis, for a one-year period. ALLARM provides each volunteer with a test kit and all materials needed, for a nominal charge of \$20, which essentially covers costs. Comparable kits from the larger chemical companies typically cost much more than this and may not be as appropriate because of the ongoing quality control procedures used by ALLARM.

Volunteers mail their test results to ALLARM where the data are entered into a computerized database and shared with vari-

ous state agencies, other research institutions and all the volunteers. In this way, each volunteer contributes to a large monitoring network capable of detecting changes in water quality over a large area of the state.

No state agency could afford the labor cost needed to provide similar data from so many streams on a consistent basis. It is the voluntary contribution of time by hundreds of citizens that makes this project work so effectively. That same spirit of volunteerism, together with the scientific data collection aspect, makes ALLARM such a valuable opportunity for science classrooms.

Making ALLARM Work for You

Teachers can use ALLARM in a number of ways to breathe life into their science classes. The simplest is to enroll as an ALLARM volunteer and monitor a stream close to, or on, school property. Each week, students collect and analyze the pH and alkalinity during science class, recess, lunch or after school.

The tests are not time-consuming or complicated. After some brief training, most intermediate grade students can easily handle the test procedures. Aside from sending their information to ALLARM, students can keep their own database. That way, when they later receive a summary of statewide information, they can compare their stream's characteristics to others in the county, region and state.

Teachers should carefully consider the best time to start this research project, remembering that data should be collected during a full year, including the summer months. Most teachers will want to start the project with the beginning of school in the fall, but that means students would leave at the end of school without having completed the project.

Some teachers might start the monitoring with the beginning of summer and collect data without students for the summer months. Then, students could become involved with the project in September and carry it through to completion with the close of school in May or June.

Teachers who are unable to collect and analyze samples during the summer months could team with other staff members or inter-

ested parents to collect data for the students. While ALLARM started with the basic idea of working with committed individuals, it also provides an opportunity for small groups to share responsibilities.

What are pH and Alkalinity?

ALLARM provides general background information explaining the causes and effects of acid rain along with specific information on the importance of pH and alkalinity. In general, these factors are easy to understand.

pH is a measure of how strongly acid a solution, or stream, happens to be. Most streams function best when the water is near neutral. As more acid is added to the stream, the stream becomes more acidic and stream life begins to suffer.

We all know the digestive juices in our own stomachs are strongly acid. Usually, these acids are appropriately balanced to provide good digestion, but there are times when our stomachs can become too acidic, and we then take an antacid to neutralize, or help counteract, the acid.

Acid rain increases the acidity of streams and threatens the life in those aquatic systems. Some minerals in underlying rocks and soil act as antacids that counteract the acids. Chemists call this natural antacid ability of water "alkalinity."

Obviously, if the antacid is used to counteract the acid faster than it can be replaced by surrounding rocks and soil, the stream's antacid ability decreases. That is exactly what has happened in too many Pennsylvania streams. When that antacid ability (alkalinity) approaches zero, the stream becomes too acidic for normal stream life.

The chemical tests ALLARM requests are not complicated and do not require a background in science or chemistry. If you can follow directions on a box of pancake mix, you can complete these easy tests.

The pH test uses a plastic strip coated with pH indicators. Simply drop one of these strips into your test sample and wait 10 minutes. Then, compare the color of the indicators with a reference chart. Easy!

Two chemicals are involved with the alkalinity test. When the first is added to your sample, it will turn green if your sample has

any alkalinity. Then, you simply count the number of drops of the second chemical needed to change the green color to pink. Easy and fun! Youngsters will love the hands-on testing procedure.

Attention, Sportsmen's Clubs

Local clubs could help their schools become involved in this project in several ways. First, help them find out that ALLARM exists. Spread the word. Give copies of this column to teachers you know or contact ALLARM for brochures you can distribute directly to the teachers.

Second, consider funding several ALLARM projects. The equipment costs only \$20, so a club could monitor several

critical streams in its area for a very minimal investment. Third, contact ALLARM about the possibility of sponsoring an ALLARM training workshop for teachers in your area. In this way, your club can introduce itself to the community and provide a benefit we can all share.

Getting started on this worthwhile program is easy. Just contact ALLARM, Environmental Department, Dickinson College, P.O. Box 1773, Carlisle, PA 17013-2896.

Send them a brief note explaining your interest in using this program as a class project. They'll send you all the information you need to become an effective volunteer monitor and to involve your students in an exciting, real-world science investigation.

Fun Games

Nature's Little Surprises

By Connie Mertz

Are these statements about the ruby-throated hummingbird true or false?

- ___ 1. Ruby throats winter in Mexico and Central America, flying nonstop over the Gulf of Mexico when they migrate.
- ___ 2. They are the only species of hummingbirds east of the Mississippi River.
- ___ 3. Males usually return from fall migrations before the females.
- ___ 4. They consume 50 percent of their weight in food every day.
- ___ 5. Their can flap their wings up to 55 times a second.
- ___ 6. They are very territorial and aggressive, and may go into a pendulum swing if an intruder is present.
- ___ 7. They are attracted not only to red flowers; they also visit pink and orange tubular flowers.
- ___ 8. They feed not only on nectar, but also on spiders and insects.
- ___ 9. Their tiny nests, about the size of a walnut, are woven together with spider webs and saliva.
- ___ 10. The female feeds her two young pre-digested meals she regurgitates from her crop.

answers on p. 64



Bob Steiner

THIS SPRING, while in the turkey woods, find the items on Linda's scavenger hunt list, or make your own list of outdoor sights, sounds and experiences you'd like to find this time of year.

Start Looking

REMEMBER the scavenger hunts when you were a kid? The list of hard-to-find items for which you combed neighborhood yards and bothered moms and dads? Scavenger hunts did more than keep you from being bored on school vacations, they made you notice things, see small details. You had to concentrate on an objective and search single-mindedly until it was located. Then, at least until the end of the game, the item was something very special, even if it was just a dog biscuit or one of your sister's earrings.

It's too bad we don't all get together and go on a scavenger hunt today. What fun we could have. We'd each go afield with a list of things to find, treasures to search for. We'd all have the same basic task, but we'd complete it in different ways, making the

hunt unique for each of us. At the end, we'd tally how many of the items we'd found, proof of how diligent we'd been or how lucky we were.

Spring gobbler season gives us a perfect excuse to go on a scavenger hunt. We can

Another View...

by Linda Steiner

make sure we see, hear, smell, feel and just plain experience what happens only in spring. Heck, we're going to be outdoors this month anyway, from just before dawn until noon. We may as well take our scavenger hunt list along and see how many items we can check off.

The May turkey season is about birds, so why not start with that category? Your first task is to hear the spooky wail of a screech owl just before dawn. You also need to hear the staccato tapping of a pileated woodpecker, as well as its Woody Woodpecker laugh. Listen for the whistle of a woodcock's wings in mating flight, and hear its nasal "peent, peent" as it searches for earthworms. (Search in places where your boots get muddy; you might also find a bottom-land gobbler.)

On the uplands, listen for the flutelike song of the wood thrush, a brownish, robin-size bird with large dark spots on its white breast. Make sure you hear the "chick-a-dee-dee-dee," an easy project. In early morning, catch the soft, musical song of

the blue jay, so different from the bird's afternoon busy-body call. You might have to actually see the bird do this because it sounds so out of character. In late morning, you must hear the scream of a circling red-tailed hawk.

In most Pennsylvania woods, it should be easy to scavenge your next item: hear the drumming of a ruffed grouse. Extra points if you actually see the bird at work on its rhythm. See and hear the buzz of a hummingbird's wings. (Watch for hummingbirds wherever there are bright, sweet blossoms.)

Flowers of Spring

Scavenge, too, to find the fast-lived flowers of spring. You need to see the fringed polygala, or gay-wings, which looks a little like a tiny pink airplane with a whirling propeller. Find the green umbrellas of the mayapple, and stoop to see the white flower beneath. Your third flower challenge is to locate at least three kinds of trilliums. Lots of choices here, such as the common red, white and painted trilliums. But you may substitute the nodding, dwarf white, or toadshade, at your option.

Find among the flowers the adder's tooth by the side of a stream, a lady's slipper near a bog, and squirrel corn on a hillside. Bend and see the Jack inside the pulpit, the orange dove heads in the columbine, and the part of the wild geranium that look's like a bird's bill. If they grow where you hunt, watch for Dutchman's-breeches — a plant with flowers like tiny white pantaloons hung upside down on a line. As a substitute, find one each of the violets: blue, white and yellow.

Get your first mosquito bite. Extra points if a black fly nails you instead. In one day, start hunting in frost at dawn and end in sweat at noon. You must be caught in a warm spring rain, and once you must be surprised by late snow. (Bonus points on the snow if found south of I-80.) One time you must take along someone new to the sport and show him or her how turkey hunting is done. More bonus points if your pupil gets a gobbler to answer a call.

Smell the perfume of wild apple blossoms and the pungent aroma of moist earth



"We Need Wildlife" is a message more people need to realize and appreciate if the future of our wildlife resources is to be ensured. To help promote that theme, the Game Commission has produced a new patch featuring a cardinal resting on a dogwood sprig. The 3-inch full color patch costs \$3 each, delivered, and may be ordered from the Pennsylvania Game Commission, Dept. MS, 2001 Elmerton Ave., Harrisburg, PA 17110-9797.

under last fall's leaves. The scent of early morning gun powder is optional, but the predawn perking of coffee is a must. No odor of wet bird dog on this list — we'll save that item for fall. You're not required to bruise a skunk cabbage to get that olfactory affront. But you should identify the scent of at least one animal that has passed, either the musky smell of a fox that marked its trail, a skunk, or the odor that lingers around a deer's recently vacated bed.

See your first whitetail fawn of the year, your first baby cottontail, the first tadpoles. Find a tuft of winter deer hair, shed by the animal renewing its coat for the warmer season. Identify a raccoon track in the mud, additional credit if you see the track of a bear, bobcat or coyote. (The coyote track will be easier to find, just about anywhere in the state.)

Find something left in your hunting coat pocket from the previous year. Make one terrible sound on your turkey call, but have the gobbler answer anyway. Become "slightly confused" as to exactly where you are in the woods, but find your way out

anyway. Climb the hill you think the tom is on, and hear it gobble the next ridge over. Step in over your boots in a cold creek while pursuing a turkey. Sit on a sandwich for the first time since last deer season.

Catch yourself dozing against a tree in the welcome spring sunshine. See a full-flowered dogwood, shadbush or redbud tree. Find a fiddlehead, be buzzed by a lazy honey bee. See your first snake of the year and correctly identify it. Do not develop your first case of poison ivy. Locate at least three buck rubs from last fall, and win the game instantly by finding a dropped antler.

You're a scavenger hunt pro if you successfully complete the entire list. Of course, the fun of a scavenger hunt is more in the searching than in finishing the task.

Come to think of it, all hunting is like that, including for May gobblers. It's the process that counts. If you take up the challenge and go out this spring with my scavenger hunt in mind, you may not return with a turkey, but you'll surely bring back the season.

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Bad times have a scientific value. These are occasions a good learner would not miss.

—Ralph Waldo Emerson
The Conduct of Life

THE PISTOL was behind his belt, in the small of his back all along, but I never saw it. And when he began to draw, I reached for mine with dread.

It was July 1990, my second year in Wyoming County, when a woman called about a raccoon cub her husband had brought home. The cub had died, mysteriously, and now, after being bitten by it, one of her daughters was sick. She asked me to pick up the raccoon and have it tested for rabies. I headed right over. More than 600 rabies cases were reported in Pennsylvania that year, and raccoons accounted for two-thirds of them.

I soon pulled into the narrow, dirt driveway that led to her tiny trailer. Four doghouses surrounded her property like sentry boxes, each with a surly mongrel, and as I walked to her home in the baking midday sun, the dogs lunged at their chains and barked furiously. I carefully stepped up on a badly weathered stoop and tapped on the door.

Shortly, a burly woman appeared with two little girls clinging to her tattered jeans. The children stared at me with dark apprehension, and I smiled at them, trying to ease their apprehensions.

"State Game Commission, ma'am. I'm here about the raccoon," I said over the frenzied barking of her mongrels.

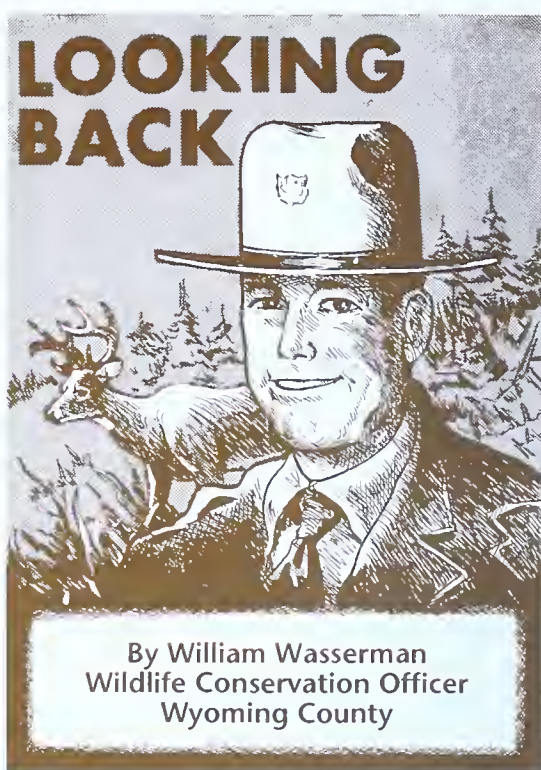
"Shut up!" she shrieked at the dogs. Then, as the dogs grew silent, pointing a stout finger behind me, "It's buried over there."

"Has your daughter seen a doctor yet?" I asked.

"Course she has. That's why you're here; he wants the raccoon tested."

"Well, would you mind walking out and showing me exactly where it is?"

"You kids stay inside," she scolded, and started across her parched lawn. Her dogs snarled balefully as we walked



by, warning me — or perhaps both of us — to stay back.

The raccoon was buried in a shallow hole, and was already beginning to show signs of decay. With gloved hands, I picked up the carcass and placed it in a styrofoam container. But then, when I started back, I noticed her children playing with another raccoon cub.

"Where did that one come from?" I asked.

"Wha . . ." she stammered, turning toward the trailer.

Her lower jaw fell into a gaping scowl. "I told you kids to stay inside," she bellowed, causing the dogs to erupt into a burst of howls.

"Shut up!" she yelled, and began hurling stones — striking several dogs before they retreated into their sweltering huts.

She marched over to her children, put her hands on her hips, and glared at them. "I told you to stay inside," she croaked. "You'll both be punished for this."

"Excuse me ma'am," I interrupted. "But where did you get the raccoons?"

She turned slowly — calculatingly — and faced me, squinting from the harsh sun, then nodded at the styrofoam box. "My husband found that one when he was stacking field stone. Its mother abandoned it, so he brought it home. Scrawny thing died in about three days. This one," she said, glancing at the other cub, "we got from a friend of his."

"What friend?" I asked.

"Why do you need to know that?"

"Maybe you better get the children inside," I said.

"You kids get in the house right now," the mother snapped. And, after picking up the cub, both children scurried up the steps into their dim trailer.

"I really don't think they were abandoned and, anyway, we have a rabies problem here," I said. "If the dead cub was infected, chances are this one is, too. Second, it's illegal to take animals from the wild. You're not allowed to possess them."

"But we didn't know that. I mean, how are we supposed to know about a law like that? The cubs were gonna die; the one in your box there was abandoned, we thought, and so was the one Ned gave my husband."

"Ned?"

"Ned Viper, from Hop Bottom. That's who gave my husband the other one. Ned found two of them in a hollow tree and had them in a cage. He gave us one, and now we're in trouble, right?"

"Well, there will be a fine."

"How much of a fine?"

"A hundred dollars for each animal."

The woman was stunned — and momentarily speechless. She glared at me as if it was all my fault.

Finally, she spoke. "You gonna take the other cub, too?"

"Yes. It has to be tested for rabies."

"You gonna kill it?"

"I have to; brain tissue is needed for testing. Your family's health takes precedence in this. If the animal is

infected, you'll each need to start treatments right away."

She turned abruptly and disappeared into her trailer, but I could hear plainly through the thin walls. "Kids, come here and bring the raccoon," she said. "We gotta give it to the game warden."

"But why?" the girls begged simultaneously.

"Because it might be sick and he wants it."

"What's going to happen to Bandit? We don't want him to get hurt. Will he go to a doctor and get all better again?" one of them whimpered.

"He ain't going to no doctor and he ain't getting better. The game warden is gonna kill him. That's what game wardens do," she snapped before storming outside with the raccoon clenched firmly by the nape.

The flailing cub was bawling in pitiful tones, provoking her dogs into another frenzy of blood-curdling yowls. "Go on, take it," she exclaimed as her children, sobbing bitterly, clutched at her shirttail.

I took the bewildered animal, gently placing it into a cardboard box, and then stared into the tearful eyes of her daughters. I wanted to console them, perhaps offer a reassuring smile. But, afraid my gesture would seem misplaced, I didn't.

Heartsick, I walked to my patrol car amidst the tears of children and the barking of dogs.

After pulling onto the dusty back road, I switched on the air conditioner full blast. It was seven miles to the state lab in Tunkhannock. As I drove toward town, I thought about how much suffering would be eliminated if people would simply leave wild animals in the woods where they belong.

Wild animals make poor pets. They bite and can be very destructive. People who take young animals from the wild are foolish. Almost never are the animals really abandoned. Most times the mother is hiding nearby, waiting for the intruder to leave.

On my way I radioed WCO Chuck

Arcovitch. Viper lived in Susquehanna County, in Chuck's district, so I asked if he could go look for the other raccoon. Chuck called back and said he'd head right over.

After I turned the cub over to the state lab, Chuck radioed to say Viper's wife had told him that Viper was working at a gas station in Tunkhannock. Chuck was on his way to speak with him, so we made arrangements to meet in town.

When Chuck and I got to the gas station, an employee said Viper had left in a hurry, about a half-hour earlier, after receiving a call from his wife. Chuck thanked the man, then told me he was going back to Viper's house. The raccoon had to be there, somewhere, or Viper wouldn't have been in such a hurry to leave.

I agreed.

"I'll follow you," I said. "Some people lose all sense of reason when it comes to their 'pets.'"

"Yeah, I know what you mean, Bill. Thanks."

As I followed him, I thought about some of the awful experiences I've endured with people who keep wild animals. The previous episode, although distasteful, was mild compared to the unbridled rage some people display when we're forced to confiscate animals they've taken from the wild and, unfortunately, grown attached to.

As I followed Chuck into Viper's driveway I noticed an old, beat-up car backed in, as if ready to take off. The windows were down, and a man was standing next to the car, talking to the driver. As soon as the standing man saw us, he promptly walked away. Chuck got out of his vehicle and approached the car as I hurried to catch up. Both of us were in full uniform.

Spotting a rifle on the front seat, next to the driver, Chuck told the man to remain in his vehicle until we checked his gun.

But then, without warning, the man wrenched open the bolt of his rifle, exposing an empty chamber, and



Question

Do I need a furtakers license to hunt foxes?

Answer

Yes. A person must possess a valid furtakers license in order to hunt or trap any furbearer, or to help in the hunting or trapping of any furbearer.

shouted an ugly string of profanities. Chuck stood his ground, warned the man about his conduct, and then said we were investigating a game law violation. Chuck asked if he was transporting wildlife.

"I ain't got nothing in my car. You can see that!" the man cried.

"I'd like you to open your trunk for me," Chuck returned flatly.

As the man glared defiantly back at him I positioned myself nearby and waited.

But as quickly as it had flared up, the man's personality changed completely. Without another word, he coolly slid from his vehicle and opened the trunk, revealing nothing but a spare tire and a few tools.

"I want to see some identification," Chuck said, and with remarkable compliance, the man reached into his back pocket and pulled out a be-draggled wallet. Then, pinching the corner of his driver's license as if it was contaminated with something, he gingerly handed it over.

After copying the man's name and address, Chuck suggested he move on. The man stared at him blankly for a moment, then quietly got into his car and drove away, fading into the shimmering heat like some weird apparition.

Chuck quickly turned his attention to the other man. He and a female companion were lounging on plastic reclining chairs, each drinking a can of beer. A small wooden table sat between them supporting a tin ashtray choked with cigarette butts. Surrounded by gnarled weeds that hadn't seen a lawn mower in weeks, it was as if they were basking under the midday sun of some tortured wasteland.

"Are you Ned Viper?" Chuck asked.

"Yeah. What do you two want?" He was about 5-10 and stocky. Thick, straw-like hair fell past his collar to a full beard and mustache. He wore glasses with thin, round rims — like Ben Franklin — and a muscle-shirt and faded jeans. (Chuck later told me that Viper reminded him of the infamous Claude Dallas, who was convicted of murdering two game wardens in Nevada.)

"We understand you gave a raccoon cub to a man over near Tunkhannock and that you have another one here. Is that true?" Chuck asked.

Viper sprang from his chair, his face contorted with rage, and began shouting obscenities. Furious that we were on his property, he called us *gestapos* and said we had no right to question him. He promised to have us arrested, too, but he mostly shouted things I could never put into print.

Clearly, Viper was unstable and seemed ready to explode. To make things worse, two young boys walked over and stood nearby. Thinking things could get out of hand and not wanting to jeopardize the kids, I asked Viper to step over to my car with us.

Viper turned to me and snapped, "I don't have to go anywhere with you."

"Look, we just want to talk to you privately," I said. "Why don't you walk over there with us?"

Chuck was standing several feet from Viper, facing his left side; I was standing directly in front of him. Viper's eyes darted nervously, then bored into mine. I knew something was about to happen.

Without warning, he did an about-face on the balls of his feet and plunked down his beer. I immediately noticed a pistol nestled in the small of his back. It looked as big as a cannon. "Hold it right there!" I warned.

"Talking about this?" he asked, drawing the gun.

From where he was standing, Chuck couldn't see Viper's pistol. I reached for my revolver only to discover that my holster snap was jammed. My stomach turned into a wrenching knot as I imagined both of us being shot.

In a blink, Viper had the drop on us. And then, that quick, it was over.

Keeping his back to me, Viper slowly and deliberately placed the gun on the table. As soon as Chuck saw the gun he sprang forward, snatching it from the table and away from Viper. It was a fully loaded .45.

"Hey, that's my gun," Viper said, whining like a child who just had his favorite toy taken away.

Chuck and I quickly escorted Viper toward my vehicle, away from the others.

"What's wrong with you guys?" Viper cried. "I just wanted to put that down before I came over here with you. What's the problem?"

"You could have been shot," I said. "That was the most foolish thing I've ever seen."

Chuck ordered Viper to turn around, then frisked him for additional weapons. Finding none, he allowed Viper to face us again.

"We came here to talk to you about a raccoon," Chuck said heavily. "But you start cursing at us and then pull a gun. For what?"

"Okay, okay already. But I ain't got no raccoon, man."

"Then you won't mind if we look around, will you?" Chuck asked.

"You can look all you want, I got nothing to hide. C'mon," Viper grinned slyly, "I'll take you on a grand tour."

Ned Viper had his faults, but stupidity wasn't one of them. He was, in fact, very street-wise.

Viper escorted us through several out-buildings, each with its own assortment of tools, machinery and odd junk. There was no sign of a raccoon or animal cages.

"C'mon, I'll show you my house, too," Viper beckoned, and we followed him into his run-down trailer.

The interior had a crypt-like atmosphere. All the shades were drawn, blocking any glint of sunshine. Junk was strewn everywhere. Several small tables were scattered about, each crammed with items. One was piled with reloading equipment and empty shell casings. Viper apparently did a lot of shooting. Other tables were stacked with old papers, magazines and sundry possessions. An extensive collection of huge knives and swords hung on every wall.

"See, there's no raccoon anywhere," Viper said soberly. "But I do have some pets. Come on."

We followed him into another room. There, centered on a card table, was a large aquarium containing an enormous tarantula. Viper reached in and gleefully pulled the fuzzy creature from its prison. Long, segmented legs seemed to grope in thousands of different directions at once, turning my back to goose flesh.

I've always felt a deep aversion toward spiders, and Viper's immense tarantula must have been the granddaddy of arachnids.

"Nice," I grinned. "He looks like he wants to go back inside."

"Naw," Viper exclaimed, "he *likes* to be out. Wanna hold him?" He extended his arm, offering the thrashing thing to me.

"No thanks," I said, knowing full well

that Viper was toying with me. "I really don't care for spiders."

Viper plopped the tarantula back into the aquarium, and we continued to follow him, certain we wouldn't find anything. Finally, we stepped back outside.

"Okay, Mr. Viper, here's your gun," Chuck said. "Officer Wasserman and I are leaving. You obviously don't have a raccoon."

Viper grinned broadly as he reached for his gun. But his expression quickly turned sour when he realized Chuck had disassembled it.

"What the . . ." he began.

"Don't worry, Mr. Viper. All the pieces are there. Here's your empty clip and nine rounds, too," Chuck said dryly.

"What's the matter — afraid I'm gonna shoot you?"

Chuck looked at him but said nothing. I saw the twinkle in Viper's eyes slowly fade.

"Okay, I guess I can't blame you," Viper said sheepishly.

Later that day I discarded my holster, after discovering that it had a defective thumb-break. And since that day I always inspect my holster before I begin my patrols.

Although we didn't find anything at Ned Viper's that afternoon, I'll never forget how what started out as a minor game law infraction quickly and unexpectedly turned into what could have easily been a life and death situation — an aspect every law enforcement officer can understand.

Cover painting by Mark Bray

Since the Game Commission first offered a spring gobbler season, going on 25 years ago, many sportsmen have learned to associate spring with getting up way before daylight, possibly driving long distances, hiking through forests, hooting like a barred owl, and then waiting for the sounds of an amorous gobbler. Sure, it probably sounds crazy to anybody who hasn't tried it, but many of those who have consider it the most challenging and rewarding type of hunting. If you've yet to experience the sights and sounds of spring from a hunter's point of view, give the sport a try. And for more on what a person might — or should — find while gobbler hunting, see Linda Steiner's "Start Looking," beginning on page 45.

A Ruff Month

MAY, THE BEST of all months, and I am out one humid, cool morning, bursting with expectation. As I walk along the Upper Trail, my expectation is quickly met by a ruffed grouse mother. She comes whining toward me from behind a fallen log, her ruff fluffed up, her tail spread, doing her best to distract me.

I am not so easily distracted, though. Instead, I concentrate on the spot where she first emerged and head resolutely toward it, ignoring her pitiful cries. Ideal nesting habitat, I think, and then I hear a soft peeping.

"Where are you?" I ask quietly as I crouch down and scan the forest floor. To my chagrin, I am instantly surrounded by tiny beige and yellow grouse chicks. The birds had apparently just hatched, and to my horrified delight they were about to forsake their rightful mother and adopt me instead.

Afraid to move because they are so tiny and fast, I remain motionless. There are 10 in all, and they are rapidly imprinting on me while their real mother, now hanging silently in the background, watches. Having no real ambition to be a grouse mother, I flee the scene at top speed.

When I finally pause and look back, I see the mother already rounding up her confused offspring. Without me to distract them, they will quickly learn to follow their real mother and forget the blue-jeaned giant who disrupted them.

But I will not forget. To be mistaken for

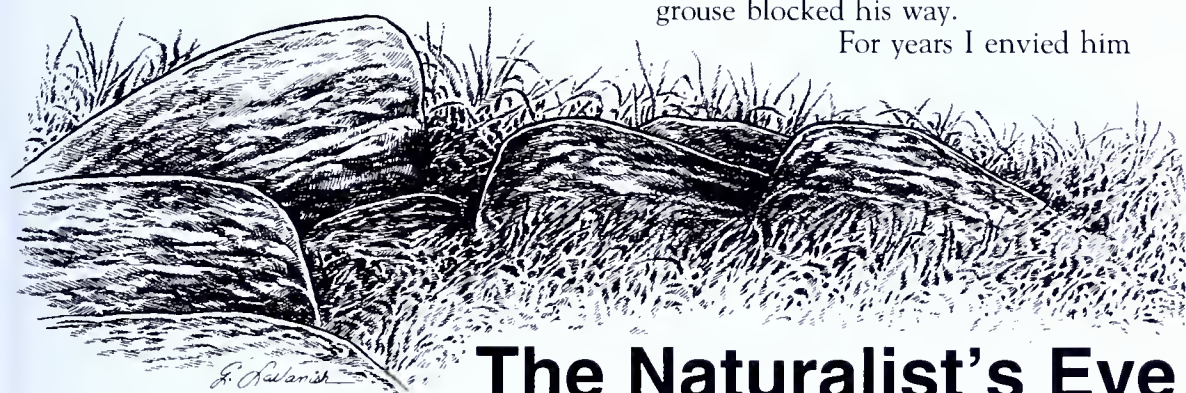
a ruffed grouse hen is a privilege few humans have experienced, a fitting climax to what has been an ongoing relationship with Pennsylvania's official state bird.

I confess that when we first moved here 21 years ago, I had little idea of what a grouse was. In Maine, where we had lived for five years, they were called "pa-tridges," and I saw one only once — a hen sitting on a nest of eggs at the base of a tree. After a short broken wing act, she fled, and I had my first and only look at a ruffed grouse nest — not much more than a depression lined with leaves and pine needles containing the usual clutch of 10 buffy eggs.

After that, I thought of grouse as rare, shy and elusive birds. So when we were stopped on our road by a parading grouse in our first spring here, I initially mistook it for some kind of tame chicken that had wandered up from the valley. But I quickly learned differently. Our primitive access road was soon dubbed the ruffed grouse's "highway of romance" because it is their favorite courting place around here.

During early spring, my husband, Bruce, is frequently forced to stop the car while a lovesick male struts his stuff back and forth in front of him, as much as seven times, before finally wandering slowly off into the underbrush. Sometimes such shenanigans hold Bruce up for 15 or 20 minutes, but I suspect that he makes no effort to hurry the birds along. He enjoys telling people at work that he is late because a "twitterpated" grouse blocked his way.

For years I envied him



The Naturalist's Eye

for those experiences. My trips up and down the road are less frequent and are usually in the middle of the day. But one May, in the middle of the day, I had my own car-stopping experience.

I was driving our big, blue 1975 truck up the hollow after a dental appointment when I encountered a female grouse brooding 11 newly hatched chicks in the middle of the road. The sight and sound of that looming, loud vehicle didn't faze her a bit. She continued sitting.

Finally, I was forced to stop and turn off the engine. Instantly she ran off to the left side of the road, crying and fanning her tail, but her chicks remained huddled on the road. After a few minutes, two fled to the right side and scrambled up the steep bank. A couple others scurried down the left side. The rest sat or hesitantly tottered toward the truck. Not wanting to keep the chicks separated from their mother any

longer than necessary, I got out and tried to shoo the chicks off to the left side of the road.

Just as I was finishing, the female flew over to the right side and a couple chicks scrambled across the road after her. The two that had originally gone up that bank were peeping piteously. Anxious to make my getaway while I had a clear road, I jumped back into the truck only to find that it wouldn't start.

In disgust I locked it up, grabbed the milk, eggs and mail, and walked the mile back home. Three hours later I walked back down to the truck and found no sign of the grouse mother or chicks, but the truck started on the first try.

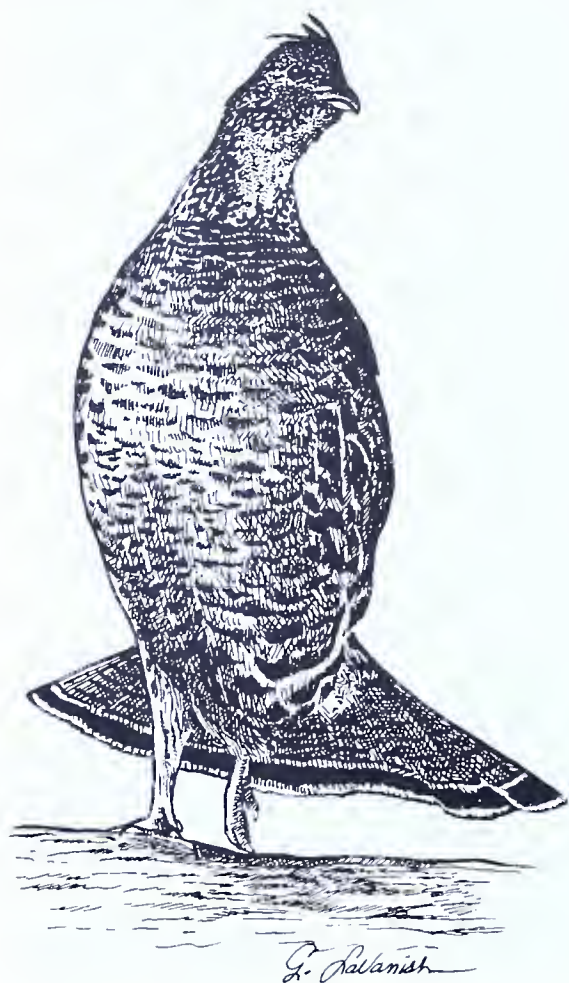
Despite that experience, I still longed to see what Bruce had been seeing each spring. So one spring evening I drove up from work with him. As if on cue, we were stopped by a displaying male ruffed grouse, his tail fanned open, his dark brown ruff standing out from his neck like a Russian cossack's fur collar. Ignoring my admiring ogling, the grouse slowly proceeded up the road bank, peering regally both right and left.

After he disappeared, I spotted a dead female on the side of the road, seemingly untouched by any predator. Just as we got out of the car for a closer look, a second male grouse took off. Then Bruce recalled that the previous week he had disturbed a threesome in that same area — two male ruffed grouse competing for the attention of a female.

According to Gordon Gullion's excellent book *The Ruffed Grouse*, an activity center is sometimes occupied by a subordinate as well as a dominant male. Usually the subordinate is slightly smaller and often succeeds to the area after the dominant one dies. So they were probably the same two males Bruce had seen before.

But what had killed the female? That remained only one of many puzzling ruffed grouse observations I have made over the years.

Another happened in a second area of ruffed grouse activity — the Far Field thicket. There one early spring day I spent long, happy minutes watching a ruffed



grouse drum until he was disturbed by a woodchuck. Since then I have often heard but not seen the drummers, so I was not surprised, late one May, to hear the usual drumming as I approached the thicket. Grouse drum all year; males drum to defend their territories from other males, and not, as many people think, only in spring to attract females.

As I entered a boggy area beside the beginnings of a stream, I heard the cry of a female ruffed grouse. She rushed toward me in classic, defensive motherhood style, and while I sat watching, she stalked around me whining.

In the meantime a male grouse, his ruff extended and tail fanned out, strutted off into the underbrush. Finally the female climbed up on to a tree branch where, for at least a half an hour, she sat clucking like a hen.

I kept expecting to see chicks respond to her, because several times before I had disturbed a grouse with young and after waiting quietly for 10 minutes or so, I had watched them reassemble as their mother clucked them back from their hiding places.

But this time nothing happened. I didn't even hear a peep. I could only agree with Gullion, who concluded his book by saying, "Each individual grouse is as different as each individual human, and while we can generalize about how they do things, there are always exceptions to the rules."

Gullion and I are not the only people who have encountered exceptional ruffed grouse. Ornithologist Robert Galati, while studying nesting golden-crowned kinglets in Minnesota, reported being repeatedly attacked by a male ruffed grouse as he walked down the same trail day after day. The grouse would seize his right trouser leg

with its bill and beat its wings vigorously. Then, every few minutes, it would step back, cluck and cock its head, staring up at Galati for a few seconds before resuming its attack.

The bird continued this sequence for 30 minutes at a time, stopping only when Galati surrendered by stepping into the heavy underbrush to avoid the grouse.

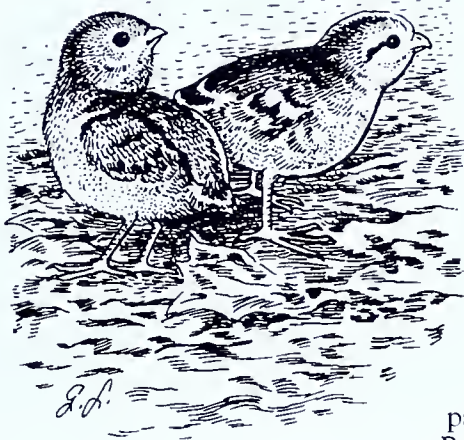
"One day he walked to the car and noticed his reflection in the hubcap," Galati

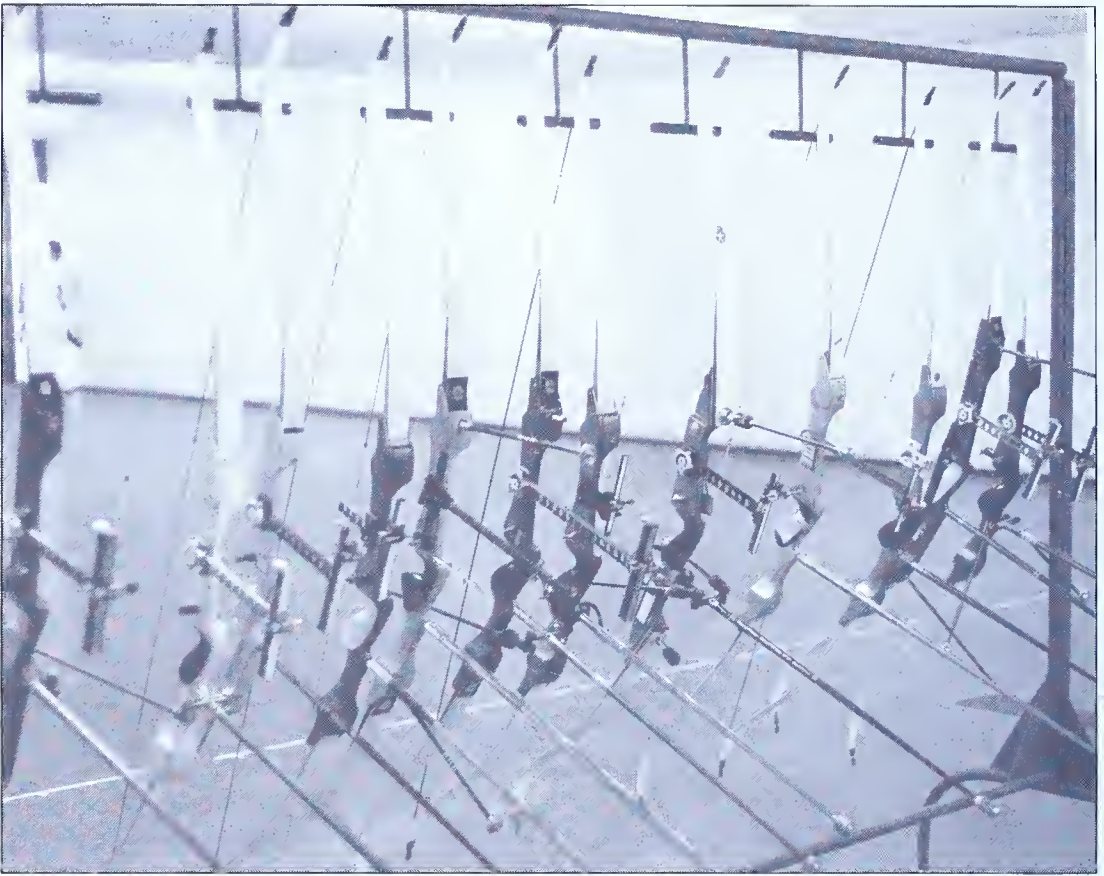
wrote in his book *Golden-Crowned Kinglets, Tree-top Masters of the North Woods*. "He attacked his image with his bill, feet, and wings. When I started to back the car, he flew into the hood and attacked the windshield. As I backed the car, he attacked the window more vigorously. As I picked up speed, he slipped off and chased the car full speed and ran right past it."

Both the car and the trail attacks continued for two weeks. But when Galati tried to film the event, using his wife, Carlyn, as a decoy, the grouse refused to attack. Carlyn had to take the pictures with Galati as the sole object of the grouse's ire. "Apparently," Galati concluded, "fair damsels are off limits to ruffed grouse."

Pennsylvania writer Tom Fegely told me of being similarly attacked along a wood's road in Clinton County while he was spring gobbler hunting. The same male hit him both when he was walking in and again, several hours later, when he was walking out. So maybe male ruffed grouse can distinguish between male and female humans.

I only know that so far, all my encounters with ruffed grouse, both male and female, have been peaceful. But I'll keep in mind that they weren't nicknamed "fool hens" for nothing.





CHOOSING A BOW has never been easy, but today's would-be bowman has far more aspects to consider than ever before. First, perhaps, is deciding if the bow is to be used on the target line, as those here, or for hunting.

The Right Bow for You

By Keith C. Schuyler

THERE WAS A time when all an archer needed was a stout bent stick, a heavy twisted string and a collection of arrows — some with broadheads for hunting, and others with field points for target shooting. The stick might be a store-bought bow stave, properly shaped, nocked for a string and varnished against the weather. Or it could be homemade from a dried section of yew, hickory, mulberry, osage orange, lemonwood or any number of other suitable trees.

Choosing a bow is as much an individual choice now as it was then, but the

options are so much more extensive that a person may take years to find just the right bow — if he ever does. More often, a shooter adapts to a given bow instead of continually searching for the perfect one.

Frankly, I haven't the slightest idea



which bow would be best for you. Nevertheless, there are guidelines that might steer you in the right direction — particularly if you're new to archery or about to make a change in bows.

If you're shopping for your first bow, you must have a goal or purpose in mind. Are you taking up archery to be a hunter or a target shooter? Do you plan to be an instinctive shooter or do you intend to use sights? Think it over. You will be influenced by friends, by watching others and by reading material written by those of us who have somehow survived the frustrations, sore muscles and aggravations attendant to becoming an archer.

A good secondhand bow may be your best bet, especially if you're not sure what you expect to get out of the sport. No matter what your age or physical condition might be, you'll eventually outmuscle or outgrow your first bow — if you can draw it right away. And that probably leads to



my first piece of advice: It's important to avoid too heavy a bow.

People often ask me to recommend a bow for them. I don't like to mention brand names, except as a way of stimulating reader interest in various products. While I do have personal preferences, it would be unfair for me to tout any one product as being better than another without having extensively tried them all. And then, more importantly, what suits and pleases me may not necessarily be the best for somebody else.

Generally speaking, any product that stays on the market for several years must have something going for it. Also, the old familiar names in archery usually connote quality, but there can be exceptions to that, too.

Companies today are bought and sold like restaurants, and top bowyers are like top chefs; if they aren't part of the acquisition, product quality often suffers. Then again, new manufacturers often emerge with new ideas or products that capture archers' attentions.

My second piece of advice would be to do your shopping at an archery shop staffed with knowledgeable salespeople, not a discount house where the clerk may think a bow is something for your hair or a candy box. Archery shops are more likely to have a greater variety of equipment and be able to back up what they sell with service.

Be wary of advice from archers who are constantly changing equipment, especially bows. These archers are often competitors who challenge the leaders but never quite make it to the top. I've known some who've spent a small fortune trying to find a bow that will make up for their shooting inadequacies.

On the other hand, don't be misled by winners who endorse products, either, or by companies that use famous names to promote their wares — especially bows.

DESPITE the resurgence in the use of recurve and even longbows, the bow of choice for most archers today is the compound. There have been many modifications in the compound over the past 20 years, but the original, eccentric-wheel type shown here is a simple smooth shooting design.



FISTMELE, the distance between the bow and the knocking point on the string, was long measured by hand as indicated on the right. Today, a T-square device, left, can be used to get a much more precise measurement, and once determined, can subsequently be used to check any deviations caused by shooting.

I'm not implying that this practice is unethical or dishonest, but I do suggest you take such endorsements with a grain of salt.

Ask yourself: "Did this famous archer's bow come from the sales rack, or was it custom made for him?" or "Were the game trophies taken under the tenets of fair chase in wild areas accessible to anyone?"

Now, back to selecting a bow. A person's age is a consideration in bow choice, both for beginners and those preparing to buy their second one (which may well be the most important bow a person ever buys).

Shooting the longbow or recurve provides a better understanding of what archery is all about. But the time you're able to spend on archery may determine whether you can develop the necessary muscles to become proficient enough to shoot well with a bow of hunting weight — preferably 40 pounds or more.

Although it takes the same amount of muscle to draw a given weight regardless of the type of bow, a compound's letoff quickly relieves the strain. Further, I think people of marginal strength should opt for the original compound design, which featured

the eccentric wheel. Today's cam bows have a much longer traverse at full draw weight before they let off, and they are generally less smooth in delivery despite providing an increase in arrow speed.

Compounds can usually be adjusted for draw weight within a 15-pound range. This provides further leeway as a shooter continues to improve his muscular ability. It is generally conceded that a bow shoots best in the middle of this range.

Consequently, you might consider a bow with a midrange weight closest to that which seems best for you. For example, if you can handle 53 pounds well, you might choose a bow that adjusts from 45 to 60 pounds. Such a bow will give you seven pounds in the upper range to play with — if you continue to get physically stronger.

Nevertheless, you should never shoot anything except a bow that you can handle comfortably. The object of archery is to hit the target, not to see how heavy a bow you can draw.

Aside from determining the proper draw, in which arrow release comes at the point of full letoff, there isn't much the individual can or should do to the bow.

Everything is determined for you by the manufacturer. For each bow there is a set of cables and a string, and you can even get a set of cable blocks designed to stop your draw at the proper point.

Charts are available for determining the right arrow shaft for the bow you buy, whether it's wood, aluminum or carbon. A suggested weight head is also provided, although here you have a choice.

In fact, most of the recommendations are just that — recommendations. You may find that for some reason you are best with a slightly lighter or heavier shaft than the chart calls for.

Whether you go for speed or penetration in hunting will also influence arrow choices. And you must decide on plastic or feather fletching.

Arrow rests, optional sighting devices, string attachments, and other accessories are up to the individual.

Bow color makes no difference at the range, but camouflage is important in the field. You can buy a fully camouflaged bow. Those who'd rather paint their own can use adhesive camouflage tape, spray paints or bow sleeves to cover brightly colored limbs. Remember, though, that sleeves may drop your arrow speed a few feet per second — more if they get wet.

With longbows or recurves, there is little margin for weight adjustment. String length makes a difference, but going too far either way can affect the inherent shooting qualities of a given bow.

Once you discover the best fistmele (longbow), or brace height (recurve), for your bow, as determined by actual measurement with a ruler or a commercial bowstring T-square, make a permanent, easy to find note of it. You will likely want that measurement for future reference.

Fistmele is the distance from the strung bowstring to the belly of the bow. It was traditionally measured for correct height by setting the clenched fist, thumb extended, against the center of the bow's belly. It is usually about six to seven inches. Brace height is the distance from the string to the center of the pivot point of the bow's grip. However, string lengths are now standardized, so shooters no longer have to do a lot of guesswork.

You may find, through experiment and practice, that your string nocking point should be higher or lower than some expert suggests. Those who still use the finger or tab release might get different results than those who employ an artificial release.

My archery arsenal includes all three types of bows. Although my first archery-killed deer was taken with a longbow I made from a rawhide backed lemonwood stave, most successes have come with an old takedown, 50-pound Wing recurve I shot (instinctively) back in the 1960s.

I had some memorable misses with that bow while collecting a black bear, a couple mule deer, a caribou and quite a number of whitetails. It also scored on a variety of small game species, including 15 grouse on a week-long trip — ostensibly made for moose — to Quebec.

Nevertheless, I am sure my average score on big game has been better with the compound, equipped with a two-pin sight, that I'm shooting these days.

Regardless of the type or style of bow you choose, it will be your muscles and your senses that must power and direct the arrow. Age, physical condition and dedication are considerations in choosing the bow that is right for you. And when it comes to those factors, age is the only one over which you have no control.

Commission 800 Numbers

Within Pennsylvania, use the agency's toll-free 800 numbers to contact a wildlife conservation officer. For the Northwest Region, call (800) 533-6764; Southwest, (800) 243-8519; Northcentral, (800) 422-7551; Southcentral, (800) 422-7554; Northeast, (800) 228-0789; and Southeast (800) 228-0791. Phones will be manned around the clock during the major hunting seasons, and about 15 hours a day at other times.



SHOOTING AT Don's new bench, designed for both right- and left-handed shooters, Bob Brahs touches off a shot from his custom .220 Swift while Don, seated at the left-hand shooters side, watches through a spotting scope.

Right to Left

By Don Lewis

Photos by Helen Lewis

ALTHOUGH I was using an accurate rimfire and top quality target ammo, my 5-shot groups were anything but one-holers. In fact, many were about an inch.

I knew something was wrong, but I couldn't figure out what. As I studied a group through my spotting scope, I immediately noticed a vast improvement in

image quality and sharpness of detail. I could even see the jagged edges in the bullet holes.

I looked again through the rifle scope, and the target was hazy and contrast was poor. Then it struck me: When I looked through the spotting scope with my left eye, everything seemed bright and sharp. Sure enough, my right eye (my shooting eye) gave poor results; the left one showed the target to be bright and sharp.

Unfortunately, my bench was built for right-handed shooters. There was no way I could shoot comfortably from my left side. Several days later, I set up the rimfire on sandbags on my outside chronograph



bench. This is a "U" type bench that accommodates right- and left-handed shooters. But the distance to the target is only 33 yards. Nevertheless, I cut several 5-shot groups that proved I could eventually learn to shoot as a southpaw.

Several eye examinations showed that I had a small cataract and a deteriorating retina. I decided to have the cataract removed and an implant put in. The prognosis was anything but good. I was told that I might see a little better, but I shouldn't expect miracles.

In the meantime, I went on the Nebraska prairie dog hunt I mentioned a few months ago and decided to work on shooting left-handed. I learned in a hurry that changing shooting sides involves much more than just being able to clearly see the target.

Due to the extensive testing on the range and other shooting I've done over the years, I've developed a very sensitive pull with my right trigger finger, but my left index finger was completely unreliable, especially on guns with light trigger pulls.

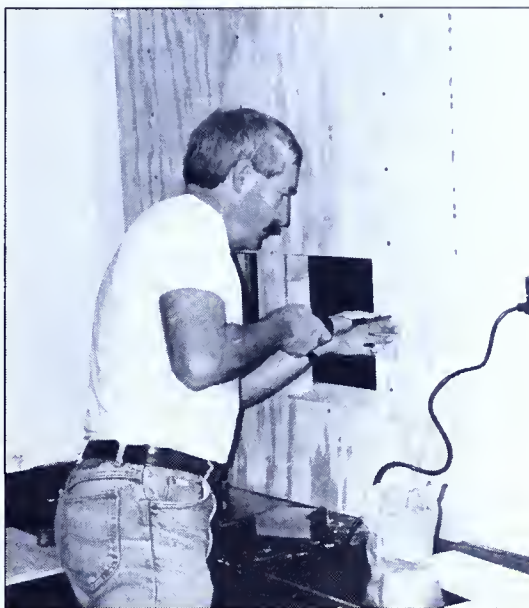
When the eye operation was over and my optometrist fitted me with new glasses, I could see better. But if I expected to test rifles and hunt varmints, I had no alternative but to build a new inside benchrest that would let me shoot from the left.

Lots of Testing

Back in 1965, when I installed the benchrest in what was then my new shop, I was doing a lot of range testing with a wide variety of varmint and big game rifles. I also had a strong following of big game hunters who came to my shop to have their rifles sighted in.

The first year I had the inside benchrest, I zeroed more than 600 rifles before deer season. I recall one Saturday shooting 42 deer outfits, which included 19 magnums. Not having insurance to cover customers, I did all the shooting, so a right-hand bench was all I needed.

Our youngest son, Tim — who really burned a lot of ammo on the prairie dog hunt — is right-handed but shoots from the left side. He had complained for years



DARREL LEWIS, above, being an engineer, designed the new shooting bench. Here he is modifying the window to accommodate the wider shooting platform. Tim Lewis, below, is installing the switch panel for lights and for turning targets at the 100-yard range.



that I should have built a "U" type bench so both right- and left-handers could shoot. Now, he was adamant that the only way I could shoot well left-handed was to build a new bench.

My oldest son, Darrel, is an engineer, so he was tagged to do the designing. He also has a keen eye for running a saber saw and cutting straight lines with a power hand-saw. We gave him the honor of cutting the

top out of a 5/8-inch sheet of plywood. Tim and I built the framework out of 2x4s. Although we used some 8- and 16- penny nails, lag screws and screw nails were used to attach the framework to the walls. It didn't take long to appreciate the potential of a power screwdriver.

After the old bench was removed and we began to seriously consider the installation of a "U" type bench, we ran into a major snag. To accommodate such a wide bench, the 16x24-inch window would have to be widened to at least four feet.

My neighbor, Jim Lasher, a retired

mason who had built the building for me years earlier, explained some of the problems involved in installing a new lentil above the window, along with other factors that would delay the project.

In the end, instead of a "U"-shaped bench, I opted for a "T" design, which required widening the shooting window by only eight inches. Fortunately, the metal lentil Jim had installed back in 1965 was long enough to allow half of a cement block to be removed. This made the new shooting window 32 inches wide.

With a "T" bench, I wanted to use the adjustable, single-post rest from my old bench. By turning a wheel under the bench I could move the post up and down, to accommodate about any gun or shooter. This is very convenient feature, but adapting it to the T rest presented another major problem.

To install this adjustable rest in the center of the front portion of the T, the stem or leg of the T could be no more than about eight inches wide, to put the center of the rear bag in alignment with the front bag. Eight inches, of course, is too narrow to accommodate an elbow rest.

Instead, I built a 16-inch wide leg, and increased the length of the metal, front sandbag holding plate from seven inches to 18 inches. This would permit the front sandbag to be moved left or right to align with the rear bag on either side of the T's leg.

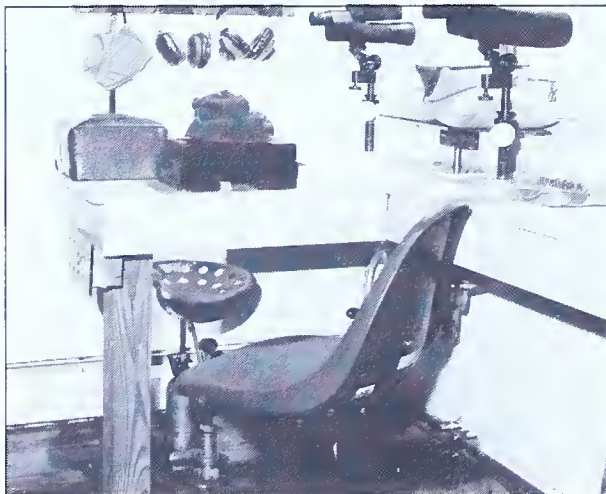
Another aspect we quickly realized is that the larger window would allow a lot of cold air to enter. To take care of that problem, Darrel designed a two-window frame. He installed a face board over the opening with two 14-inch wide window openings. Using metal tracks, he installed half-inch sliding covers.

It's a simple matter to unlock one of the covers and slide it up. Because I also often use two spotting scopes, both covers can be raised so another person can watch the target during the shooting.

My old shooting stool consisted



BEFORE & AFTER, above and below, Lewis's new bench will certainly accommodate both right- and left-handed shooters. Note double shooting windows, the wide platform for moving front sandbags, the hydraulic seat and the controls for adjusting the front shooting platform.



of a mowing machine seat welded to an 8-ton hydraulic jack. Using two levers, it can be adjusted to any height. To get the project finished, I bought a swivel-type boat chair for the shooter on the other side. Tim finished the bench by wiring the five-control light and target turning switches to the back of the bench.

Shooting Eye Improves

Despite all our work on the new bench, I'm extremely pleased to report that my right eye has improved to the point where I can once again not only shoot right-

handed, but even shoot scopes with thin-wire reticles fairly well.

Were my efforts and financial outlay wasted? It sure looked that way. But I was able to console myself with thoughts that I would definitely use the left side some of the time, and Tim could certainly take full advantage of the new bench we'd worked so hard to build.

But when I asked him how the new bench worked from the left side, he told me that he had zeroed in from the right side for so many years he didn't see any point in changing now.

Books in Brief . . .

(Order from publisher, not from Game Commission)

The Wild Turkey: Biology & Management, compiled and edited by James G. Dickson, Stackpole Books, Cameron & Kelker Sts., Harrisburg, PA 17105, 480 pp., \$62.95, delivered. Presented here is the most authoritative and up-to-date information on the wild turkey, written in a semi-technical style to appeal to a wide range of turkey enthusiasts. This book is organized into four general sections — history, biology, turkey habitat and management, and the wild turkey's value and future — and comprised of 24 chapters, each written by a different, expert author. This book is similar in scope and content to the popular *Elk of North America* and *White-Tailed Deer* books published by Stackpole several years ago.

Wood Hick, Pigs-Ear & Murphy, by Bill Pippin, Galetton Chamber of Commerce, Galetton, PA 16922, 246 pp., \$25. Published by the Galetton Chamber of Commerce, this book traces the history of Galetton. Beginning with the early settlement of the area in the early 1800s, almost 200 years of history is covered in this interesting volume. Many vintage black & white photographs make this book especially appealing, sure to please everybody who has a soft spot for Pennsylvania's "God's Country."

Birds of the Chesapeake Bay, by John W. Taylor, The Johns Hopkins Press, 701 West 40th St., Suite 275, Baltimore, MD 21221-2190, 83 pp., \$37.95, delivered. For 30 years, John Taylor has been studying and painting birds around the Chesapeake Bay. Presented here, in an attractive coffee table edition, are 40 of Taylor's paintings, each accompanied by his journal entries that describe not just the bird and its natural history, but also how it has been affected by the many demands that have been placed upon the Chesapeake in recent decades.

Game Loads and Practical Ballistics for the American Hunter, by Bob Hagel, Wolfe Publishing Co., 6471 Airpark Dr., Prescott, AZ 86301, 360 pp., \$30.50, delivered. Not a book full of ballistic tables — like a technical reloading manual — presented here is useful information for the hunter/handloader interested in sound advice on getting the most from both hobbies and, ultimately, making clean one-shot kills in the field. A revised edition of a book first published in 1978, two new chapters are "Recent Cartridge and Component Development" and "Fifteen Years of Positive Bullet Development." Developing loads and sighting in for long range and short range situations, selecting bullets, where to aim and much more practical information is offered here. A good reference for any handloader of big game and varmint cartridges.

In the wind

j. scott rupp



The future of hunting, trapping and fishing on national wildlife refuges is currently being studied by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. USFWS has completed a Draft Environmental Impact Statement that outlines seven management alternatives for refuges. Of the seven strategies, two completely ban all sport hunting, fishing and trapping on refuges other than in Alaska, according to *Outdoor Life*. The public comment period on "Refuges 2003 — A Plan for the Future" will continue until June 15. For more information, write the Service's Division of Refuges, 4401 N. Fairfax Dr., Room 670, Arlington, VA 22203.

Connecticut runs a program called Windows to Wildlife in which civic groups and volunteers enhance wildlife habitat for nursing homes. The work typically involves installing bird feeders, baths and nest boxes. Connecticut reports it has experienced an enthusiastic response: 134 state nursing home facilities have asked to participate in the program.

Wolves in Michigan's Upper Peninsula, currently on a strong comeback, may be in jeopardy because of mange. The *North Woods Call* says at least one and perhaps two wolves have died of mange. A wildlife biologist says that while mange is rare in eastern wolves, it is rampant among the region's coyotes, and that is probably why the wolves have become afflicted by the deadly disease.

Arkansas' wildlife agency will be hosting a workshop titled "Becoming an Outdoorswoman" this fall. It is intended to help women acquire basic knowledge of a variety of outdoor sport and recreational activities. The workshop is also for outdoorswomen who would like to learn additional skills and for those looking for camaraderie of like-minded people. Participants can choose from a variety of subject sessions, including shooting opportunities, turkey hunting, deer ecology, waterfowl identification, photography, camping, orienteering and a host of other activities.

The gray whale has been removed from the endangered species list, reports the National Wildlife Federation. Under the Endangered Species Act, which is up for congressional reauthorization, gray whale populations will be monitored for five years. The whale is still protected by the Marine Mammal Protection Act.

Ducks Unlimited has moved to a new home in Memphis, TN. Its new headquarters, known as the International Center for Wetlands and Waterfowl Conservation, was funded through a special capital campaign. The nonprofit organization was formerly headquartered in Long Grove, IL, and it was forced to move when zoning laws prevented building expansion.

Texas wildlife officials have begun a mountain lion study to determine reproduction, survival and possible expansion of the big cats. Wildlife biologists believe the state's lion population may be at a modern all-time high and the cats may be moving into new areas. Twelve mountain lions, which will be captured by treeing them with dogs and then tranquilizing them, will be fitted with radio collars.

Answers: All statements are correct.

On the Trail of Pennsylvania's Black Bear

Two years in the making, based on the most exhaustive and comprehensive black bear research conducted in North America, *On the Trail of Pennsylvania's Black Bears* is a most entertaining and informative video production on Pennsylvania's premier big game animal. Hosted by Gary Alt and photographed by Game Commission videographer Hal Korber, this 100-minute video will appeal to all wildlife enthusiasts. It costs \$29.95, delivered. Order from the Game Commission, Department MS, 2001 Elmerton Ave., Harrisburg, PA 17110-9797.



1993 WATERFOWL STAMP

“Dawdling Dabblers”

CONSERVATION

Each year the Commission offers for sale a voluntary waterfowl conservation stamp. Profits from these sales are used for wetland acquisition, habitat development and



waterfowl-related education programs. This year's design features a pair of northern shovelers by York artist Glen Reichard.

COLLECTOR VALUE

The stamps have great collector value because editions are available for a limited time only; stamps remaining after two years are destroyed. The 1991 stamp will be destroyed after Dec. 31.

COST

Stamps cost \$5.50 each, \$22 for a plate block of four and \$55 for a full sheet of 10. When you purchase five or more full sheets (any available editions), the price drops to \$40 per sheet. Prices include tax and delivery.

Waterfowl conservation stamps are available at all Commission offices and wildlife management areas, and at participating license issuing agents and stamp dealers. Limited edition signed prints are available from art dealers and galleries.

PENNSYLVANIA GAME NEWS

JUNE 1993

ONE DOLLAR





mammals of the mountain
(from Set No. 2)

Bird & Mammal Charts

The Game Commission's ever popular bird and mammal charts are perfect for homes, classrooms, camps — just about anywhere. Created by internationally renown wildlife artist Ned Smith, these charts feature the state's most common mammal and bird species — 179 in all.

Charts are grouped into sets; Sets No. 1 and No. 2 each contain four 20"x30" charts and are particularly useful for classrooms.

Set No. 1 features winter birds, marsh and water birds, waterfowl, and birds of prey. **PRICE: \$6**

Set No. 2 depicts mammals of farm and woodlot, mammals of the mountain, birds of the forest, and birds of field and garden. **PRICE: \$6**

Set No. 3 includes all eight charts, each 11"x14" in size. **PRICE: \$5**

The charts are sold only in sets, not individually. Prices include sales tax and delivery.



birds of prey
(from Set No. 1)

Send check or money order (no cash, please) payable to Pennsylvania Game Commission, Dept. MS, 2001 Elmerton Ave., Harrisburg, PA 17110-9797. Be sure to ask for a complete list of the agency's sale items and free publications.

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PENNSYLVANIA GAME NEWS (ISSN 0031-451X) is published monthly for \$9 per year, \$25.50 for three years, or membership in Pennsylvania's Cooperative Farm-Game Project or Safety Zone Project; to Canada and all other foreign countries, \$10 U.S. currency, per year. Published by the Pennsylvania Game Commission, Harrisburg, PA. Phone (717) 787-4250. Second-class postage paid at Harrisburg, Pa. CHANGE OF ADDRESS: POSTMASTER: Send both old and new addresses to Pennsylvania Game News, 2001 Elmerton Ave., Harrisburg, PA 17110-9797. Allow six weeks for processing. Material accepted is subject to our requirements for editing and revising. Author payment covers all rights and title to accepted material, including manuscripts, photographs, drawings and illustrations. No information contained in this magazine may be used for advertising or commercial purposes. Opinions expressed here do not necessarily reflect those of the Pennsylvania Game Commission. Copyright © 1993 by the Pennsylvania Game Commission, an Equal Opportunity Employer, the programs of which are all administered consistent with the goals and objectives of Affirmative Action. All rights reserved.

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Editorial

Economically Speaking

THE U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service recently released the “1991 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation,” the eighth such survey conducted since 1955. According to this survey, more than half the people in the United States 16 years old and older (108.7 million) enjoyed some type of outdoor-related recreation in 1991.

During that year, 14.1 million hunted, 35.6 million people fished (9.7 million hunted and fished), and 76.1 million participated in at least one form of wildlife-related recreation such as photography, bird watching or feeding wildlife. Half the hunters and 57 percent of the fishermen also participated in nonconsumptive activities.

A major purpose of these periodic surveys is to determine the economic impact of outdoor recreation. In 1991, expenditures totaled \$59 billion, of which equipment and trip-related expenditures amounted to, respectively, \$28.5 billion and \$22.8 billion.

Hunting and fishing expenditures in 1991 totaled \$40.9 billion. Of this, \$15.3 billion (37 percent) was for travel, \$18.9 billion (46 percent) for equipment and \$6.7 billion (16 percent) on other expenditures, such as for magazine subscriptions, licenses and sportsmen’s club dues.

When it comes just to hunting, the 14.1 million people 16 years old and older hunted 236 million days and took 214 million trips. Their expenditures totaled \$12.3 billion. Of this, \$3.4 billion (28 percent) was spent on trip-related expenses and \$5.2 billion, (42 percent) on equipment. Of the 14.1 million hunters, 10.7 million pursued big game — which includes wild turkeys — on 128 million days, spending \$5.1 billion on trips and equipment. Small game hunters totaled 7.6 million, and they spent 77 million days and \$1.5 billion on hunting trips and equipment. Migratory bird hunters numbered three million, spending 22 million days and \$686 million. Finally, 1.4 million hunters went after raccoons, groundhogs and other animals, spending 19 million days and \$255 million.

Nationwide, 87 percent of the hunters hunted only in their state of residence, 5 percent hunted only in other states, and 8 percent hunted in their own state and at least one other. Sex and age breakdowns indicate 14 percent of the males and 1 percent of the females 16 years old and older hunted in 1991. Of the hunters, 13 million (92 percent) were males and 1.1 million (8 percent) were females. The percent of the U.S. population by age group who hunted remained around 9 percent, until it dropped to 6 percent for the 55 to 64 age group and 3 percent for those 65 and older.

For the 1991 survey, the procedures were changed from those used in the previous seven surveys, in order to provide more accurate results. Unfortunately, these changes make comparisons between this and any previous surveys largely invalid, but in future years the results and trends will be more accurate.

Outdoor recreation is obviously important to many Americans — possibly even more than this survey suggests — and keeping track of interests, expenditures, demographics, and other factors is important to better manage and protect our wildlife resources for everybody’s benefit. These national surveys conducted by the USFWS are important for resource managers, politicians and others interested in best managing our wildlife resources for all concerned. — *Bob Mitchell*

Letters

Editor:

I've always wondered who I could write to concerning the articles in *Game News*. The hunting stories remind me of when I was growing up, especially of my great uncle, who taught me how to hunt and about ethics and sportsmanship.

Today I don't bring home the small game I used to. The animals seem harder to hit now. I still enjoy wildlife, though. Several years ago I purchased some ground and have been doing some conservation projects on it to attract wildlife.

As I reflect on what the outdoors has meant to me, I want to do what I can to make sure kids today will have the same opportunities I've enjoyed.

K.J. LUTZ,
LUCINDA

Editor:

Why must muzzleloader hunters buy stamps five months before the season starts? Why can't we apply for a doe license and muzzleloader stamp? We could shoot only one deer? Why can't we have an earlier season, like the archery season?

J.L. MONG,
COOPERSTOWN

The license requirement was enacted in 1984 to lessen the impact of uncontrolled deer harvests during the muzzleloader deer season. Then, as now, a person with a muzzleloader stamp was entitled to take any deer anywhere in the state, and this had the potential to seriously jeopardize deer populations in some counties. By requiring

hunters to choose between an antlerless deer license or a muzzleloader stamp, hunting pressure and the deer harvest during the muzzleloader season has been reduced, maintaining the traditional values of the hunt in the process.

Editor:

I've been a regular *Game News* reader for years, and I was glad to see that you publish letters from subscribers. While I certainly enjoy reading the stories about other peoples' hunts, I'd like to see more features covering how-to subjects.

For instance, how to use a compass, how to build a temporary shelter, how to start a fire when it's raining, signs of approaching storms, how to field-dress a squirrel, deer or any other game animal, signs to look for when scouting for a new place to hunt. These and many other subjects would be helpful.

P. OLSHAVSKY,
BRUNSWICK, OH

Editor:

I've been receiving *Game News* for many years. Even though I never hunted, I read it from cover to cover because it is good reading.

Although retired from farming, I still own about 100 acres, and I'll let anyone hunt here, mostly because of what I've learned about hunters through *Game News*. In fact, I would like to have someone reduce our raccoon population, and

provide relief from the groundhogs and skunks, too.

P. HURST,
NARVON

Editor:

I am 80-plus years old and have subscribed to *Game News* for many years, and I often wonder why it's so rare to see any "Field Notes" from my county. Does nothing happen here?

W. DEMOSS,
FAYETTE CITY

Submitting "Field Notes" is not mandatory for our officers. What appears in the magazine is the best of the notes we receive from the officers who submit them.

Editor:

I have been very fond of hunting, trapping and fishing in Pennsylvania since I was young, and I never missed a hunting season until last year, when I was at Marine Corps boot camp at Paris Island, SC.

Now, after my father finishes reading his *Game News*, my mom mails them to me. I really enjoy reading them. They make me feel like I'm hunting at our cabin, hiking on the Appalachian Trail or just relaxing outdoors.

Game News is the next best thing to being home and enjoying the outdoors. Someday I hope to be a wildlife conservation officer. Keep up the great work.

C. KUNKLE,
DENVER

**Your comments are welcome. Mail them to "Letters,"
2001 Elmerton Ave., Harrisburg, PA 17110-9797.
Letters will be edited for brevity and clarity.**

Crowing about Crow Hunting

By Jeff Bickmore

IT WAS HOT. Stifling hot. Hardly a breeze stirred. Sweat oozed from my every pore as the mid-July sun beat down unmercifully. The heat didn't bother the insects though; they buzzed about and pestered us constantly. These minor annoyances, however, would be quickly forgotten just as soon as our elusive quarry made an appearance.

Despite the temperature and the bugs, it didn't take long to talk my hunting partners Don and Doug into the first hunting trip of the season for one of the wariest birds that ever flew across Pennsylvania — the common crow.

I enjoy the traditional seasons as much as the next guy, and I won't dispute the fact that outwitting a tom turkey is about as challenging as it gets. But before you call me loco, or worse, let me fill you in on a few details.

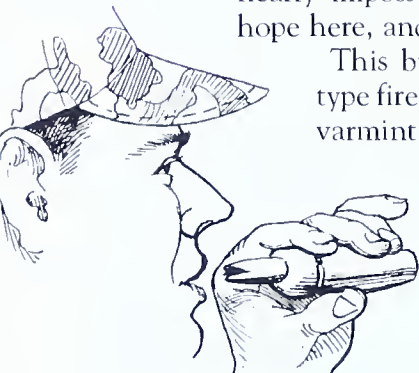
The first thing you have to know about crows is that they have an uncanny ability to spot not only people, but even distinguish the ones who are bent upon doing them harm — hunters. Out on a golf course, golf club in hand, you might see crows swarming all over the place. But head afield with a license on your back and a shotgun in hand, and you'll be lucky to have a crow come within a mile of you.

Crows usually travel in flocks, and that means more than a few pairs of sharp eyes (with a bird's eye view) are on the lookout for potential troublemakers. Crows also have an annoying habit of posting lookouts while the rest of the flock feeds on the ground.

Trying to get the jump on birds in this situation is nearly impossible. Long-range plinking is your only hope here, and one shot is all you'll get.

This brings up the difficult decision of what type firearm to use. A .22 rimfire or small caliber varmint rifle can be a good choice, provided you are proficient enough to hit a two-inch target at long range. Safety is a definite factor here, though. Using a rifle means passing up shots at crows perched in trees.

Another option is to use a shotgun, even though it does limit your shooting opportunities. I prefer the scattergun —



not necessarily because it's more productive, but rather because I think the shooting is more exciting. The close range limitations inherent in shotgunning mean that you must lure the birds to you, and this is where the fun comes in.

Crows are intelligent and social creatures. They are constantly communicating about many things, the majority of which only crows will ever know. However, there is one topic of great interest to all crows that even the most casual observer would notice — a good fight. Owls and hawks are crows' worst (or favorite) enemies and they will rarely pass up a chance to tangle with either one. Simulating one of these noisy neighborhood brawls can be one of the most effective techniques for getting your share of target practice.

The first step is to perfect the art of crow calling. Learning crow language can best be accomplished simply by listening carefully whenever crows are present, whether you are hunting or not. Nearly everybody who has spent any time afield has seen or at least heard a flock

of crows after a hawk or owl. These events are very loud, and it takes a lot of calling and squawking for a good imitation. Instructional tapes are available, as are electronic tape callers.

I prefer to use hand-held crow calls or even none at all, often relying on my own vocalizations. With or without a call, imitating crows is easy with a little practice. A manufactured crow call probably produces the best results for most people.

One call I have had great success with is Haydel's Triple Tone Crow Call, which can produce three types of crow caws and also a passable hawk scream. The advantage to a call is consistency and dependability, which can be very important.

Sometimes, though, being able to mimic the caws of a specific crow with your own voice can be essential. Crows — like people — can sound very different, and no crow call that I've heard is capable of responding to every bird.

Decoys are another essential element for crow hunting. An owl decoy situated among a few scattered crow decoys can



Crows are intelligent and social creatures, constantly communicating about things that only crows know about. And they're always spoiling for a good fight.

be a real magnet when combined with proper calling.

Finding an area that crows frequent is vital to the success of any hunting trip. Because crows are numerous and range widely, it usually takes only a little bit of scouting to locate feeding and roosting areas, and other hot spots.

Getting permission to hunt is as important for crow hunting as it is for any other type of hunting, and most farmers are all too happy to let hunters on their properties to thin out these oftentimes destructive birds. Quite often all you have to do is ask.

Crop Damagers

Crows will eat just about anything, and I've seen farms where crows have easily rivaled deer or woodchucks in the amount of damage done to crops. Crow hunting is a great way to get to know some landowners, too, and help ensure a hunting spot later on in the year when the more traditional seasons arrive.

My favorite location is on a nearby farm that has been plagued by crows to the point where the farmer was desperate to get rid of them. On days that we are able to hunt, it seems we can at least keep them from alighting in the fields and doing too much damage.

Our first hunt of the season was starting out slow, however, and my hunting buddies and I began to grow restless. I decided to take a walk along the edge of the field where we had set up when suddenly there they were, heading straight for me and closing quickly. The tree line was only a few feet away and I jumped for cover.

I knew I was in trouble as soon as my left foot hit the ground. My ankle turned underneath me and I could feel the tendons tear. Down on the ground I went, fearing the worst. Needless to say, the flock continued on its way unmolested. Maybe it was my imagination, but their cacophony

of caws seemed to take on a distinct laughing tone.

After being half carried back to the truck, I began to examine my ankle. I'd had sprains before and I suspected that this was the case again. An X-ray confirmed my diagnosis. Hunting would have to be put on hold for several weeks.

Time passed slowly as my injury began to heal. My trigger finger was getting itchier by the day, however, and I longed to get back into the field.

The first trip out was to a local shooting range for a round of clay crows — or, uh, clay pigeons. The next week was the real thing, back on a tree line, but this time closer to the truck. Luck seemed to be with us.

A large and vocal flock soon set up shop behind a screen of tall oaks, and they were busily engaged in some sort of important crow activity. A fight perhaps, or possibly a roosting owl in their neighborhood. Whatever the reason, the flock was distracted and we were quick to take advantage of the situation. Moving slowly (not by choice) into position we started calling, hoping to draw at least one curious bird over the trees and into gun range.

At least some members of the group seemed to be answering us as they took flight and began to circle, wondering who the newcomers were. Suddenly, about 30 yards off to my left and at treetop level, came the most daring bird of the bunch. A lookout, no doubt, sent in to survey the situation. The bird apparently spotted that something was amiss, and it wheeled back in a tight circle.

The blast of my 12-gauge sent the other members into a panic, but the scout went straight down. After I hobbled over and picked it up, I began to wonder if this could have been one out of the same flock I saw flying overhead a month earlier, laughing at me as they passed out of sight.

CROW SEASONS are split into two parts. For the 1993-94 license year, the first season will open July 2 and run through Nov. 28; the second part begins Dec. 31 and ends April 3. Hunting is permitted only on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays. The bag limit for crows is unlimited.

Bowhunting for Woodchucks

By Robert Butz

I PUSHED THE BOW AHEAD of me and bellied up to it with a single arrow clenched in my teeth. The ground was hot and dusty and the sun-baked grass poked through my drab green T-shirt like a hundred tiny needles. The only thing worse than the heat and the grass was the legion of bugs that had mistaken my carcass for an all-you-can-eat luncheon buffet.

The tiny strip of tangled brush to my left offered little shade but enough cover to break my silhouette and lead me directly

to the pile of logs ahead. Thirty minutes and 10 yards later I was almost in range of the quarry I had been stalking for the better part of the afternoon.

The old boy never strayed more than 20 yards from the safety of the log pile, and he had a nasty habit of standing up to survey his surroundings every time I was ready to move. There he stood, staring at me like a chubby little periscope, checking the wind and watching as if he knew something was not quite right.



SPOTTING AND STALKING is an exciting and challenging way to get within bow range of the ever-alert groundhog. Binoculars are a great help in this regard. Remember that archers, too, must wear a blaze orange cap while hunting chucks.

Ten more minutes of "duck and crawl" placed me 20 yards away and kneeling behind an old hickory tree. Along the way I'd managed to nock the arrow and ready myself for the shot I hoped would eventually come.

When he finally turned, giving me a quartering-away shot, I drew the 58 pounds of my Bear recurve, picked a spot behind the shoulder and let the string slip from my fingers.

The shot looked good, but that may have been wishful thinking. My outstretched arm was shaking with a good case of groundhog fever as I watched the arrow do little more than shower the varmint with dirt. In the end, all I had to show for my efforts was a broadhead in dire need of resharpening.

Hunting woodchucks with a bow is a lot of fun and can be a welcome reprieve from the summertime monotony of paper punching and stump shooting. But if you decide to pursue the ground grizzly with a bow and arrow, be prepared for a humbling experience. It's hardly as easy as whistling one to a standing position and then shooting it with a rifle — any rifle.

Anybody who's hunted woodchucks with a rifle will probably argue that groundhogs are not very bright. They're likely to say that a woodchuck has poor eyesight and only an average sense of smell. This notion may be attributed to a groundhog's natural curiosity to get a positive identification on any and all disturbances. It's common for one to flee to its den and then stick out its head to get a whiff or view of what disturbed it.

But rest assured, once you're identified, the chuck will be gone. True, woodchucks are curious, but they're always alert and

ready to flee at the first sign of danger. For an archer, this means that the primary objective is to get close to the quarry.

In heavily hunted areas I have watched groundhogs lumber to their holes after seeing me moving along a fencerow a couple hundred yards away. And I have lost count of the times I've been betrayed by a fickle wind during a stalk and heard that high pitched whistle that is a groundhog's way of saying you blew it.

Even if you are fortunate enough to get

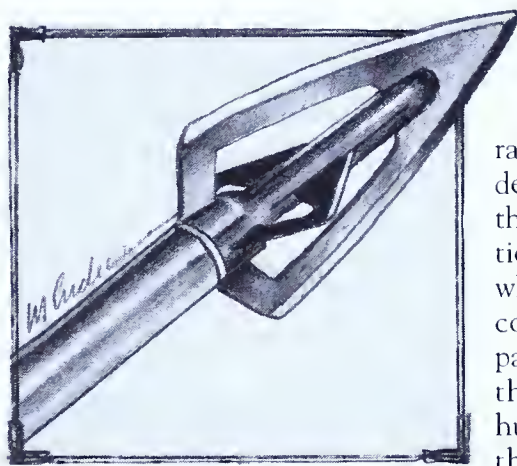
within range of a wary chuck, its vital area is only about the size of a baseball. Accurately placing shots under these conditions gives the archer all the education he needs to shoot at whitetails in the fall with confidence. This is of paramount importance in the tradition of bow-hunting and is something that target and stump shooting can never do.

Archery equipment for groundhog hunting is simple — use the same

equipment you use for whitetails. The only additions you will probably have to buy are a half-dozen extra arrows and a sharpening stone, or replaceable blades for broadheads dulled after shooting. But be assured the added investment will be well worth the confidence you will get by hunting and shooting live game animals under hunting conditions.

I cannot overemphasize the importance of using razor sharp broadheads when hunting woodchucks. I have heard of bow-hunters using target points, Judo points and even blunts for woodchuck hunting. Don't do it. A groundhog is a tough critter and requires a razor sharp broadhead to drop him before he escapes to his den.

It's also important, I feel, to have the arrow remain in the groundhog to hinder his escape. For that reason, a game stopper should be used. This is a tiny metal gadget



A RAZOR-SHARP broadhead is vital to making a clean kill on whistlepigs. Never use field tips or blunts.

that fits behind the broadhead and has either springy or solid arms that slow the arrow's passage and greatly diminish the possibility of it passing through the chuck.

Another item I think is important is some sort of wind watcher, something to indicate which way the wind is blowing. Some hunters use a butane lighter, but I prefer shaving talc. Talc is light enough to move even on a seemingly windless day. Many bowhunters simply tape a piece of thread to the bottom limb of their bow. Whichever method you choose, always be conscious of wind direction.

Without question, the most exciting way to hunt chucks is by stalking. Spotting a groundhog, organizing a stalking strategy and then successfully getting within shooting range is the most challenging form of hunting I can imagine. Then, connecting with a woodchuck is the ultimate reward for everything done just right.

I wear drab colored or camouflage clothing to help break up my outline while sneaking along fencerows, stream bottoms and other natural avenues that get me close to a grazing groundhog. Just like the riflemen, though, archers hunting woodchucks are required to wear a fluorescent orange hat.

Footwear is another important consideration when stalking. Tennis or jogging shoes are good choices because they are light and comfortable. Boots can be hot and get mighty heavy during summer afternoons. You might even choose to go barefoot. Stalking barefoot is something every bowhunter should try — under the right circumstances. You'll be surprised at how quiet and fun it can be.

I also carry a good pair of binoculars. They're great for distinguishing between a groundhog and a clump of grass at 100 yards. I like the compact models because they are still small enough to stick in a cargo pocket when it's time to stalk.

When glassing for chucks, focus your attention along shady tree lines and fencerows. Glass slowly because even the biggest groundhog can hide in grass only a few inches high. In many instances, the

only time you may see a woodchuck is when it stands up to look around.

If stalking is not your style, try setting up near a number of active dens and ambushing the chucks when they exit their holes. Sometimes you can incorporate summertime deer scouting with groundhog hunting. In late summer both whitetails and woodchucks are often found around the edges of corn and soybean fields. Find an area with ample deer sign and then look around for woodchuck holes. When you find what looks to be a good spot, set up your stand and wait. What could be more like Pennsylvania deer hunting?

Remember that groundhogs are not found only around open fields. Some of the biggest woodchucks I've ever seen were in the woods. This is probably because they receive little hunting pressure. Situations like this are ideal for bowhunters utilizing a portable treestand.

Whichever way you choose to hunt, don't take any risky shots. Wait for a broadside or quartering away shot; never shoot at a groundhog that is aware of your presence. Despite their bulk, woodchucks are agile and will jump the string.

It is best to wait until the woodchuck is a few yards from his hole and facing away from it. If you hit the chuck, it will usually run in a straight line rather than turn around. This is good because it reduces the chance of a wounded woodchuck making it down his hole.

Groundhogs are most active in the early mornings and late afternoons. But like a wise old whitetail, some grizzlies will feed at other times of the day. This may be in the middle of the day when the other woodchucks are asleep in their dens. In undisturbed areas, groundhogs will feed off and on all day long. Sometimes they'll even come out in the rain.

If you're serious about bowhunting, try chasing woodchucks. Killing a groundhog with a bow and arrow takes as much woodsmanship and shooting skill as taking a whitetail. If you've never tried hunting these wary critters, you may find that it's a great summertime activity.



BURB
CARROLL

WALKING at a Child's Pace

We adults move too fast, too impatiently. Take a lesson from the younger crowd: be fascinated and investigate everything.

WE STRUCK A DEAL. While his little sister napped, I agreed to share a nature hike with my grandson. Our objective was to furnish "Show and Tell" items for the next day's kindergarten session. I harbored misgivings about the excursion; Adam has a tendency to loiter, a trait not compatible with an adult who approaches most of life's engagements expeditiously.

My apprehensions were not unfounded. Tying his hiking shoes, a newly acquired skill, took considerable time — merely an intima-

tion of the delays to come. "Where's my walking stick?" he asked. He had used it earlier, but orderliness is not among my grandson's traits. One more detail — his sandbucket was missing. He needed it to bring home his treasures.

Eventually, our trek got underway, and as we rounded the edge of the yard I began to feel a bit optimistic. "That's a columbine," the youngster announced. The observation served as a personal rebuke, for I had passed it by all summer and never even noticed.

Peter Steinhart pointed out that the nation is not tuned to the music of footsteps. He maintained we do walk to the refrigerator and to deliver the mail, but not for adventure.

John Burrows observed, "We are not innocent and simple-hearted enough to enjoy a walk; it is too slow, too cheap."

For me, the walk in which I was engaged needed an objective. Just what was it my

grandson was searching for? He wanted to introduce me to the Indian pipes that I had never seen, but which flourished at the far end of our course. Even now he was already thoroughly engrossed in our excursion. The sighting of a ruffed grouse or a white-tailed deer would have made my work complete, yet Adam seemed not to need such specifics.

Henry David Thoreau wrote, "We need to develop a genius for sauntering, equally at home everywhere. . . . We saunter like a meandering river and every walk can be a crusade." My hiking companion that day, it appeared, had mastered Thoreau's art.

He found interest in the deserted apple trees along the unpaved road and collected some of the fruit. The frogs that splashed into the stagnant pool fascinated him; he insisted we should wait to hear them croak. He observed the fungi flourishing on the dead hardwoods. On these, he thought, his mother could paint nature scenes and he'd show them at school.

While I kept checking my watch, Adam was completely enjoying the outing. His pail was rapidly filling with mementos, and he was totally oblivious of time. Thoreau would have found Adam an excellent partner.

"Don't walk for exercise," warned the naturalist of Concord. "Walk to find the spring of life." Fatigue could have claimed my young companion, for the hill was steep and the course was long, but there

By George L. Harting

were no complaints. I regarded my assignment as a duty to complete. In contrast, my partner was cultivating the joy of walking.

An alert observer remarked, "We find writers and philosophers rather than bankers and doctors clustered on the pathways, because walking feeds a different part of the mind." The pleasures of walking are the pleasures of having sight, sound, touch, smell and taste all at work together. The out-of-doors becomes a school room; walking fires the imagination of the poet and the artist, who absorb what they experience and in turn fire the imagination of the rest of us.

A Dozen Poets

A dozen poets could be named who were persistent walkers, and when Percy Bysshe Shelly and Mary Wollstoncroft eloped, they walked their first hundred miles. It was not a hurried walk along a busy river that qualified Bryant to write "To a Waterfowl," nor was it a quick hike around the farm boundaries that inspired Rupp's "Autumn Requiem." It is the leisure hike, one which begins without preconceived objectives, that allows the imagination to run free.

For most of us, this theorem is verified by the memory of the late Ned Smith, Pennsylvania's master artist and profound philosopher. Probably one of the most widely read outdoor writings circulated in our state is Ned's diary, *Gone For The Day*.

In its preface, Ned is described as one who spent most of his time "with only the sky above his head, the earth beneath his boots, and the wind in his face." In his sauntering, Ned learned the secrets of Broad Mountain, the happenings on the abandoned farms in his environs; he knew every bog and its inhabitants, and he had intimate conversations with the mighty Susquehanna which flowed by his back door.

These are the opening sentences of his diary: "For more years than I care to admit I have missed no opportunity to leave my native habitat and snake off somewhere into the fields or woodlands. Even in high

school, when my pals were consumed with football and the like, I elected to spend my Saturdays hiking . . ."

Ned Smith walked at a child's pace, and as a result he was able to name every rare bird, he knew where the unusual flowers grew, he could name our native plants and insects, and he accurately tabulated the annual waterfowl migrations. Walking put Ned's imagination to work.

Walking allows one to get into a completely different state of mind. This is true, of course, if the adventure takes one into relatively unspoiled nature. Some temperaments are content to take to the gardens, but that is a lost cause; it is impossible to import the woods to oneself. Humans need to touch base with nature in its rawest form.

The dignity of the hike is found in the field and woods, not in the artificiality of man's facsimiles. Thoreau remarked, "Not a flock of wild geese cackles over our town, but it to some extent unsettles the value of real estate."

Marcia Bonta penned "Outdoor Journey" in an effort to catalog the ultimate in wilderness opportunity. The Hook Natural Area about which she wrote is a 5,000-acre tract within Bald Eagle State Park, in the heart of the commonwealth. A single paragraph from her skilled pen beckons us to respond:

"Although the walk is less than three miles," she wrote, "the area is so beguiling that it is easy to spend most of a day rambling rather than hiking, stopping frequently to soak in the beauty at every peaceful spot, eating a trail lunch beneath the hemlocks, and stretching out in the sunshine to relax. Such a leisurely pace allows you to see only a small portion of the Hook Natural Area, but you should emerge from the experience refreshed and amazed that such a remote place exists so close to civilization."

It is the uncluttered mind that interprets the music of the hills. The poet is able to press the wind, the stream and the prairie into his service when he is at peace with the world. The uncluttered mind is

the prerequisite for grasping the walking stick.

The opener for antlered whitetails is priority time for most sportsmen; elaborate preparations precede the zero hour. The camp pantry is well-stocked with staples, the roster is properly signed, thermals are hung, and rifles are sighted in. But all such foresight means little if the participant is goaded by mental stress.

Lonely Business

Who can have his mind on whitetails when the moving van is due tomorrow and the fragile items are unpacked? I know the feeling. Posting a deer stand is a lonely business between sightings when the mind is cluttered and preoccupied with trivia.

The prerequisites for a fruitful hike can equal the requirements for a successful hunt. Herein lay the pitfalls that threatened to derail my walk with Adam from becoming a memorable event.

I knew well the route we would take. I had watched the tenants harvest their maple syrup, had hunted cottontails there

and had tabulated the whitetail population inhabiting the area. The exercise would be "old hat" I assumed.

I knew quicker ways to fill Adam's needs for "Show and Tell." In short, I had more important things to do. But I ignored the fact that it would be an education for him to gather his own souvenirs. I had dedicated my time to chaperon a hike and undertook the chore with, figuratively, my bills unpaid and my lawn overgrown. Who deserves to grasp a walking stick when the mind is cluttered? It is a sacrilege to drive the body a mile into the woods when the spirit is not with it.

Adam and I had reached the apex of our journey. He was noticeably tiring; the accumulation of treasure in his sandbucket was considerable. But he insisted that we investigate the hemlock bog where he and his mother had discovered the Indian pipes. It was a foreboding place; windfalls and residue from lumbering operations made the excursion difficult for little feet.

He urged me on and insisted upon crossing the bog that stretched the full



HE OBSERVED the fungi flourishing on the dead hardwoods. On these, he thought, his mother could paint nature scenes he could show at school.

length of the hemlock swamp. I envisioned muddied shoes, wet feet and bruises sustained from wrestling with the underbrush. My charge pushed ahead, however, with persistent determination. He had a goal to fulfill.

Ultimately, Adam conceded that it probably was too late in the season to find Indian pipes, but he did want to look at the area surrounding the spring that fed the bog. No amount of discouragement would dissuade the youngster, and ultimately I agreed he should go on. I told him I'd wait for his return.

A Success

Our excursion ended a success. As I impatiently waited for the child's return, a jubilant exclamation filled the canopy of the conifers: "Here they are, Pop-Pop!" The lad had stumbled onto a cluster of late surviving Indian pipes, and he was elated to be able to introduce an adult to a new dimension of the outdoors.

My companion was ready now for us to

reroute our steps. As we left the bog, we filled his bucket with pine cones and then intercepted the trail that led us home.

We stopped to rest several times, which added time to the trip that I might have otherwise invested. But it mattered little. I had learned from my grandson what springs of life can be discovered when one takes the time to walk at a child's pace.

Solitude

*Happy the man who can leave his cares:
The stress of work and world affairs,
To tramp about through the meadows and fields
And enjoy the treasures that nature yields
And feel its inspiration.
Happy the man who finds a place:
An interlude in time and space
Where he can pause to muse and dream
By a country lake or a mountain stream
In quiet meditation.*

—Barbara Burrow

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Nuisance Geese

Increasing resident Canada goose flocks across the state are causing problems, and one solution is relocation. But that probably won't always be a viable option.

By Brian J. Gafney

EVERY JUNE finds many Game Commission personnel participating in a roundup. But this isn't about cowboys and cattle drives. This is about Canada geese and one of the growing wildlife problems in the state. In many suburban and other developed areas here, Canada goose populations have grown to excessive levels, largely because of the sanctuary and food offered in these protected environments.

Each year brings increasing complaints about geese grazing, defecating and at

times even threatening people around parks, golf courses and lawns. One way the Commission has responded to these complaints is by trapping the birds and giving them to southern states for reintroduction purposes.

Northeast Region Law Enforcement Supervisor Ted Vesloski, who ran the roundup in the northeast, explained that the geese are gathered during a two-week period when they're molting and, therefore, unable to fly. The birds are gently herded into V-shape pens, from which they're picked up and put in crates.

Workers from other states (this year, Mississippi) looking to establish goose populations often come here to help collect the birds.

This trap and transfer program started in the 1970s. It has been going on in the Northeast Region for about five years. "We expect to take 400 to 500 geese in Wayne and Pike Counties," Vesloski said. "Last year, throughout the state, 4,388 were taken."

At Elizabeth Lake in Pike County, 10 people, including Food & Cover Corpsmen from SGL 180, WCOs and deputies, helped capture the birds.

According to Pike County WCO Rob Buss, the program does help curb nuisance



THE GOOSE RELOCATION program is designed to alleviate nuisance problems. Canada geese often run afoul of people, especially in areas where they can't be hunted or are being fed.

goose problems. "At a site near Milford we used to take 100 geese and now we're lucky to get three or four," he explained. "As can well be imagined, complaints have dropped dramatically."

Once they're moved, geese rarely return. Of the 28 birds captured at Lake Elizabeth, for example, only one had been banded from a previous year. According to Vesloski, it was banded in 1987 by the South Carolina Wildlife and Marine Research Department before being released down there.

Many of the geese captured are goslings, smaller than the mature birds, which range from seven to 12 pounds. The captured geese are not immediately sent to other states. Instead, the birds are taken to a holding area — birds from Pike County are taken to Middle Creek — before heading to a cooperating state.

About a thousand geese make up a full load for an air-conditioned tractor trailer. WCO Buss said one year a privately contracted trucker brought a load of catfish up on his run north, sold it, and returned south loaded with geese.

But this trap and transfer program is not considered a viable solution to our nuisance goose problems. It's very costly and not practical in many circumstances. Also, finding states that want the birds is getting increasingly difficult, and soon there will likely be no outlet for the birds.

Ultimately, any solutions to our nuisance goose problems rest right here in Pennsylvania.

The Commission discourages people from feeding geese because the practice concentrates the animals, and once they become accustomed to the free handouts, they quickly pick up habits that cause problems. Instances abound of acclimated geese blocking traffic, dirtying public ways and crowding out other wildlife.

On the other hand, Canada geese are valuable components of the state's wildlife resources. Nearly everyone enjoys watching large migrating flocks in the spring and fall, and the proud parents tending their young in late spring and summer. Of course, the Canada goose is also a prized game bird for waterfowlers.

The coming years will no doubt see more sophisticated techniques being employed to better manage this bird.

The Elizabeth round-up went hitch-free, and fast. Personnel unloaded stakes, wire fencing and large wooden crates, set up the trap, then waited quietly, in touch by radio with boats that slowly herded the geese to the V.

Once in, despite the slippery goose-manure footing, the birds were safely transferred to waiting crates. Vesloski credited the success of the Northeast goose roundup to his men, saying, "It went well because we have a top-notch crew."



BOATS ARE USED TO herd the geese, which can't fly because they're molting, into a V-shape wire enclosure. The birds are then relocated. For the time being, Mississippi is still taking geese from us, but that may not last long.

Audubon in Pennsylvania

Although it's not widely known, John James Audubon got his first taste of America in the little town of Mill Grove. — By Mike Sajna

“ONE DAY, while watching the habits of a pair of Pewees at Mill Grove, I looked so intently at their graceful attitudes that a thought struck my mind like a flash of light, that nothing, after all, could ever answer my enthusiastic desires to represent nature, except to copy her in her own way, alive and moving! Then I began again.”

John James Audubon was 53 years old when he wrote those lines. The year was 1838. He had recently completed the last plate for *The Birds of America*, one of early America's masterpieces of science, art and literature, and was perhaps feeling a bit nostalgic about the beginning of his career.

“On I went,” he continued, “forming, literally, hundreds of outlines of my favorites, the Pewees; how good or bad I cannot tell, but I fancied I had mounted a step on the high pinnacle before me.”

Largely due to the existence of the National Audubon Society, Audubon today is one of the best known explorers, naturalists and artists in American history, ranking just below such near mythic figures as Daniel Boone and Davy Crockett. He is hailed for his connection to places as far flung and diverse as the Florida Keys, Louisville, KY, Louisiana, the Carolinas, the Missouri River country, Labrador and Newfoundland.

Seldom, however, is Audubon's name tied to Pennsylvania. Yet Mill Grove, near the junction of the Schuylkill River and



Perkiomen Creek, was not only the place where he first began to come to grips with his art, but also his first home in the United States. The Montgomery County site is the place that gave him his wife and where he spent what “was doubtless the happiest year of his life,” according to Francis Hobart Herrick in *Audubon The Naturalist*.

Audubon was born on his father's plantation on Santo Domingo (now Haiti) on April 26, 1785. His father, Jean Audubon, was a sometime French naval officer, slave-trader, merchant and planter. Jean mar-

ried a wealthy widow nine years his senior and spent most of his time in France, sailing and managing the family's business interests.

On his Santo Domingo plantation, Jean also kept a series of mistresses, one of whom, Mademoiselle Rabin, described as "a creole of Santo Domingo," became the mother of the future naturalist and artist. Creole at the time was used to refer to anyone of Spanish or French descent born in a colony.

Rabin died shortly after her son's birth. Jean Rabin — as Audubon was then called — remained on his father's Santo Domingo plantation until he was four, when he was taken to France, where Madame Audubon welcomed him and raised him as her own.

His father and stepmother formally adopted him when he was nine, and when he was 15 years old he was baptized Jean Jacques Fougere Audubon. Three years later, Jean Audubon sent his son to America to manage Mill Grove, a small estate he purchased near the end of 1789. The son would later write:

"In Pennsylvania a beautiful state al-

most Central on the line of our Atlantic Shores, my Father in his constant desire to prove my friend through life gave me what Americans denominate a beautiful plantation refreshed from the Summer heat by that clear Stream the Scuikill River as well as traversed by a Creek named Perkioming fine arable and wood land."

Audubon landed in New York in the autumn of 1803. Instead of immediately heading for Mill Grove, though, he walked to Greenwich, CT, where he cashed a letter of credit and succumbed to yellow fever.

Back in New York, the captain of the ship on which he had sailed took him to Morristown, NJ, where he was put in the care of two Quaker ladies who he would later say saved his life.

Once recovered from his illness, Audubon was taken to Philadelphia by Miers Fisher, "a rich and honest Quaker" who managed his father's American business affairs. Fisher introduced the young Audubon to his daughter and proposed that he remain in his home. But the naturalist chafed at the severity of the Quaker lifestyle and fled to Mill Grove in the



THE PLANTATION at Mill Grove was to become a training ground for the young Audubon. In those days, he wasn't the rugged explorer type, as pictured on the previous page, but rather a "dandified young hunter . . . in satin pumps and silk breeches."

MILL GROVE marked the beginning of Audubon's love for bird hunting. After collecting specimens with his gun, the artist would then study them.

spring of 1804 — the third year of Thomas Jefferson's presidency.

Provided with a quarterly allowance "considered sufficient for the expenditure of a young gentleman," Audubon the woodsman began to emerge. In place of the rugged, buckskin-clad frontiersman of later years, though, he was, as John Chancellor notes in *Audubon*, "the dandified young hunter, roaming the placid Pennsylvania landscape in satin pumps and silk breeches."

It was during his Mill Grove period that Audubon began to hunt birds in earnest, both for sport and to study them for his drawings. He would remain a hunter all of his life, an aspect many people seem to downplay today.

Shortly after his arrival, in a little cave on the banks of Perkiomen Creek, Audubon also conducted the first bird banding experiment in America, on some phoebes or pewees.

After a few unsuccessful trials, he wrote, "I fixed a light silver thread on the leg of each, loose enough not to hurt the part, but so fastened that no exertions of theirs could remove it." What he hoped to learn by the experiment is difficult to say.

After deciding he had to start again if he was going to be an artist, Audubon found it impossible to portray in a lifelike manner the birds he had shot for his studies. "But, alas! they were *dead*, to all intents and purposes, and neither wing, leg, nor tail could I place according to my wishes."

At first, he tried to arrange his subjects with the help of thread, raising and lowering heads, tails, wings and legs in attempts to recreate poses he had seen birds take in the field. But still something was missing. They did not make the "blood rush to my temples" as the living birds did.

Recalling the mannequin he used while studying with the renowned French artist Jacques Louis David in Paris, Audubon constructed a wooden bird to use in his work. The result was a "tolerable-looking



Dodo." He gave up on the mannequin and kicked it to pieces after "a friend roused my ire by laughing at it immoderately."

Obsessed with the idea of making his drawings sing with life, Audubon early one morning ordered a horse saddled and galloped off to Norristown. Arriving before sunrise, he found the village asleep, so he rode down to the Schuylkill River where he took a bath. On returning, he entered the first shop he found open, purchased a supply of wire and hurried back to Mill Grove, then down to Perkiomen Creek where he shot a kingfisher.

At Last

Carrying the bird back to his studio, he sharpened several pieces of wire and ordered the miller to bring him a board of soft wood. Then he passed the wire through various parts of the bird's anatomy and fastened it to the board. "The last wire proved a delightful elevator to the bird's tail, and at last there stood before me the *real* Kingfisher."

He immediately began drawing the bird, later writing: "This was what I shall call my first drawing actually from nature, for even

WITH THE AID OF WIRE, Audubon was able to make his mounts — and the paintings he derived from them — come alive. Mill Grove soon began to look like a museum.

the eye of the Kingfisher was as if full of life. . . .”

Audubon soon had Mill Grove looking like a museum. “The walls were festooned with all kinds of bird’s eggs, carefully blown out and strung on a thread,” a brother-in-law would write. “The chimney-piece was covered with stuffed squirrels, raccoons and opossums; and the shelves around were likewise crowded with specimens, among which were fishes, frogs, snakes, lizards and other reptiles. Besides these stuffed varieties, many paintings were arrayed on the walls, chiefly of birds. He had great skill in stuffing and preserving animals of all kinds. He had also a trick training dogs with great perfection. . . .”

But even more than his art and nature studies, Mill Grove changed Audubon’s life by giving him Lucy Blakewell, “one of history’s great wives,” as Chancellor calls her.

Being French and the son of a man who was once held captive by the British, Audubon at first ignored the Englishman William Blakewell when he purchased the neighboring estate of Fatland Ford. At the same time, though, he admired his neighbor’s marksmanship and well-trained dogs. Then, in the fall of 1804, the two men met in the woods while grouse hunting and began talking. Audubon forgot his Anglophobia, the two men became friends and the artist a regular visitor to Fatland Ford.

“Well do I recollect the morning, and may it please God that I never forget it, when for the first time I entered Mr. Blakewell’s dwelling,” he would write of the couple’s meeting.

“It happened that he was absent from home, and I was shown into a parlour where only one young lady was snugly seated at her work by the fire. She rose on my entrance, offered me a seat, and assured me of the gratification her father would feel on his return, which, she added, would



be in a few moments as she would despatch a servant for him . . . and there I sat, my gaze riveted, as it were, on the young girl before me, who, half working, half talking, essayed to make the time pleasant to me.”

Despite her father’s belief that Audubon was too unbusiness-like to marry, the couple became engaged near the end of 1804 and Lucy would become her husband’s foundation.

“Without her courage, loyalty and faith,” Chancellor notes, “Audubon would not have emerged triumphant from the many vicissitudes which lay before him, and the world would never have been presented with *The Birds of America*.”

Lucy left her prosperous Pennsylvania home without a complaint and stood by Audubon from his days as a bankrupt Kentucky storekeeper through his years as a poor itinerant artist, to the time he became the toast of European and American society, socializing in London with the novelist Sir Walter Scott and dining at the White House with Andrew Jackson.

Although Audubon loved Mill Grove’s natural beauty, “its fine woodlands, its extensive fields, its hills crowned with

ALTHOUGH AUDUBON returned briefly to Pennsylvania when he came back from France, he never lived here again.

evergreens, offered many subjects to my pencil,” and the area was home to his future wife, he would remain only until the spring of 1805. It was then that Francis Dacosta made his appearance.

A native of France, Dacosta was named Audubon’s guardian by his father and replaced Miers Fisher as his agent at the end of 1804. He also bought a half interest in Mill Grove and started to mine lead on the property, with the understanding that if the mining venture was a success, Audubon would be taken into the business. Dacosta, however, objected to the proposed marriage of Audubon and Lucy, and cut off the artist’s allowance, which led to bad blood between the pair.

“Dacosta was intended to teach me mineralogy and mining engineering, but in fact he knew nothing of either,” Audubon writes, “besides which he was a covetous wretch, who did all he could to ruin my father, and indeed swindled us both to a large amount. . . . A greater scoundrel than Dacosta never probably existed.”

Hoping to convince his father to discharge Dacosta, Audubon walked to Philadelphia and then New York, from where he planned to sail to France. When he reached New York, however, he found that the letter of credit given him by Dacosta was actually a note asking that the bearer be arrested. The artist was saved from jail by Lucy’s uncle, Benjamin Blakewell, a New York merchant, and reached France in the spring of 1805.

In France, Audubon failed to convince his father to remove Dacosta, but quickly adapted to life on the family’s estate, where



he spent his time hunting and drawing birds. He would remain an entire year, giving up his life of luxury only when it appeared as if he might be conscripted into Napoleon’s army.

Forming a partnership with Ferdinand Rozier, son of a French judge, Audubon attempted to compete with Dacosta at Mill Grove, but gave up the idea after a few months. The two men sold their share of the property to Dacosta and headed off to seek their fortune as merchants in Louisville.

And so Audubon’s Mill Grove period ended. He would return to Pennsylvania to marry Lucy in 1808 and visit Meadville, Pittsburgh, Philadelphia and other locations on other occasions. But never again would he live in the state that had had such an influence on him.

Cover painting by Mark Anderson

Wood ducks certainly rank among Pennsylvania’s most attractive birds, and as far as being a breeding resident here, they rank second only to mallards as the most common. Medium size dabbling ducks, wood ducks can be found in forested habitats throughout North America. They nest in cavities and this time of year are busy raising their young. Clutch size runs around a dozen.



Turnpike Trophies

Some of the best whitetail hunting in the state is found close to the whine of passing cars and the roar of 18-wheelers.

NO, THIS IS NOT about roadkills on the Pennsylvania Turnpike, although I'm sure many trophy size bucks are killed on the major thoroughfare. In my 20 some years of commuting on this super highway I've seen more than a few on the berm.

I also know that the strips of land bordering the turnpike, particularly where it passes through suburban Allegheny County, contain the food, cover and safety that sustain healthy deer populations and allow for the production of outstanding trophies. The topography along this section of the turnpike is mostly steep hills gouged by deep valleys. During construction of the highway, large areas on each side were excavated or filled.

As a result, over the years a checkerboard pattern of second growth and mature trees, intermingled with housing and commercial development, has been created. This, in turn, has provided an ideal environment for white-tailed deer.

I pass a spot going to and from work where a herd of up to 10 deer can be seen each morning and evening. This is within 100 yards of the turnpike and literally in the shadow of a six-story commercial complex and a large suburban hospital.

The location is not unique nor a secret. The immediate area is hunted heavily during archery season. Outlying woods and brush are also well hunted (shotguns only) during the regular deer season.

Following are some of the experiences I've enjoyed while hunting less than 150 yards from this high speed asphalt strip.

For 19 years, from 1949 to 1968, I hunted deer in the big woods country of Warren County without getting a shot at

a legal buck. Then, due to a job change, I had to quit hunting in 1968, and it wasn't until 1984 that I purchased my next hunting license. That year a thin covering of snow and a brisk 22 degrees marked the opening of buck season. A half-hour before dawn, Dad and I were about 300 yards from home, walking along the service road of a seldom-used railroad spur. The sound of passing autos and trucks came clearly from the turnpike only 150 yards to our right.

After Dad dropped off to his stand — near an electric transmission tower high on a bluff overlooking several deer trails — I continued on for another 200 yards along the service road. I wanted to watch a semi-cleared right-of-way that crosses the railroad spur and continues down over the hill toward the pike.

I sneaked along the gas line in the direction of the turnpike. When I peered over the top of an embankment I saw a beautiful 8-point buck standing 125 yards away, right in the center of the right-of-way. Standing perfectly still, he watched my every move. I slowly raised my shotgun and took careful aim. I had a problem: The cars and 18-wheelers traveling the turnpike were passing behind the buck, directly in my line of fire.

I lowered my gun and, after 30 seconds of continued confrontation, watched the buck walk slowly into the brush.

When hunting such a patchwork of woods, railroads, highways and houses, it's very important for a hunter to be completely familiar with his surroundings. In many instances, shots must be passed up because of what lies beyond the target.

By Bob Delaney

The previous summer and fall, while jogging along the railroad service road, I had seen deer on numerous occasions. Most impressive was a heavy antlered buck so elusive that I never was able to count points. His horns were exceptional, though, both in spread and height.

When I would see him sneaking out ahead I'd mutter, "See you in December, buddy." I was determined that this deer would wear my tag.

Therefore, I was hardly dejected when the 8-point disappeared into the brush. This was my trophy's territory. I walked about 30 yards into the brush, to the junction of two deer trails that also gave me a view of the valley below.

Slight Movement

After an hour I caught slight movement about 120 yards away. At first all I could see were hooves approaching at a steady piston-like pace. Then I made out the shape of a deer; when it got a little closer I saw antlers. It was him.

The deer closed within 40 yards and still hadn't seen me. My pulse was pounding but I wanted to let him come as near as possible without spooking him. He kept on coming, neck stretched forward, a plume of vapor two feet long streaming from his nostrils at every breath. As he started to cross the pipeline, barely 30 yards away, I aimed at his shoulder and squeezed the trigger. He dropped like a sack of grain.

Later that evening, when I picked up

the butchered deer, the processor told me that of the 94 bucks to come through his shop that day, mine had the largest and most impressive antlers of all.

That was only a prelude to what would happen in subsequent years. The first day of the 1985 season found me sitting in the same spot where I had killed the deer the year before. It was a bright morning with the sun coming up low over my left shoulder. The lay of the land was such that I could see my shadow in the treetops in front of me.

When another shadow appeared in the treetops I instinctively turned to my left. Less than 30 yards away stood a buck and a doe. They had seen me and were waiting for me to move. I very slowly started to raise my gun, but the deer took two bounds and vanished in the heavy brush.

Later that morning I moved down the bank about 30 yards. I was still able to watch the same area I had been watching from above. A little before noon a buck appeared at almost the same spot where I had been sitting. He was alone and moving slowly with his nose to the trail. From where I was standing, he was silhouetted against the bright sky.

Beyond the buck, 300 yards away, I knew there was a housing development. The trajectory of a 12-gauge slug, shot at that angle, would surely carry to those houses. I couldn't shoot.

The buck stopped on the horizon, his head down as though collecting scent from the trail. He stood motionless for what seemed like an eternity. Watching, I reasoned that my only chance would be if the buck broke to his left, down the bank ahead of me.

Suddenly, without warning, the buck took a leap down the bank as though bent on suicide. I put the front bead on his shoulder and shot as his feet hit the ground. He spun to the right and disappeared into a gully.

I HAD A PROBLEM: Directly behind the buck, in my line of fire, were the cars and trucks traveling the turnpike. There was no way I could shoot.



That's where I found him, shot low behind the shoulder. I no sooner dispatched the deer when another hunter appeared. It had been his approach that had turned the fat 8-point down the hill, affording me a shot.

With two nice deer in as many seasons, I was looking forward to more of the same, but little did I know how interesting and frustrating the ensuing years would be.

In 1988, for example, I hunted my usual location all morning without seeing a deer. Because Dad wasn't with me, I walked over to the electric transmission tower where he liked to stand — it was a bluff overlooking several deer trails. When I sneaked to the edge of the bluff there were two bucks directly below, 30 yards away.

The deer were feeding and neither had spotted me. The two were only about 10

feet apart and appeared to be identical. I studied them for about two minutes, comparing antlers and waiting for one to give me a good shot.

Finally the buck on the right noticed me. He wasn't alarmed, but every now and then he stopped feeding and looked up at me. I decided he was the one I'd shoot. He presented a perfect target, standing broadside. I put the sights on his shoulder and squeezed the trigger.

At the shot the deer moved about eight feet into some heavy brush. I could see only his dark, motionless outline. I figured the shot was a fatal one. The other buck continued feeding, oblivious to the shot. I suppose deer become accustomed to the noises of the trucks and cars and are not alarmed by the sound of vehicles or gun shots.

DON'T FORGET!

Deer license deadlines near

Hunters should be aware of a number of important changes to the deer management program. Beginning this license year, all hunters who wish to take an antlerless deer must possess a valid antlerless license for the county in which they are hunting.

The lone exception is that muzzleloader hunters will continue to have the opportunity to harvest a deer of either sex statewide during the flintlock season.

Because archers now must have an antlerless license to take an antlerless deer, the timetable for issuing these licenses has been moved up two months. County treasurers will begin accepting antlerless deer applications through the mail on Aug. 2 for Pennsylvania residents. Nonresidents may apply beginning Aug. 16 (mail only).

In counties with remaining antlerless licenses, bonus applications will be accepted from all hunters beginning Aug. 23 (mail only). The opportunity for second bonus licenses — through the mail and over the counter — will occur Sept. 7.

Antlerless licenses will be mailed to successful applicants by Sept. 24.

Hunters wishing to buy a muzzleloader license must do so by July 31. Purchasers of flintlock stamps must give up their antlerless applications, although they still may apply for bonus licenses. The combination muzzleloader license has been eliminated.

A regular hunting license is required to purchase both the antlerless license and the muzzleloader stamp. Regular hunting licenses go on sale July 1, and sportsmen are encouraged to buy their licenses as soon as possible. Likewise, first-time hunters who want to hunt for antlerless deer should complete the required Hunter-Trapper Education course before antlerless licenses go on sale. Contact the region office in your area for a schedule of classes.

One last note: The Game Commission will be issuing antlerless licenses for Potter and Philadelphia counties. Follow the application instructions given on page 71 of the 1993-94 hunting and trapping digest.

AT THE SHOT the buck moved into some brush, but the other deer continued to feed. It's possible that, living where they do, these deer become accustomed to loud noises.

At last, the buck on the left saw me. His flag went up and he bounded away. To my amazement, the buck I had shot at crashed out of the brush and ran off with him. A thorough check of the area left no doubt I had missed completely. I recall the sight picture I had on that buck and to this day I don't know how I could have missed. It's possible I shot over the buck, a common error when shooting at a sharp downward angle.

Last year I hunted the first five days of the season and didn't see a single deer. On Saturday I sat at my favorite stand and listened to the cars and trucks whiz by. At noon I decided move. There is a spot nearby where my brother Larry likes to post. It's in a fallen tree that provides good camouflage and a clear view of the wooded valley below. Since Larry had gone hunting in the mountains, that's where I headed.

It was a warm afternoon as I leaned back against the fallen tree with my shotgun across my lap. Before long I saw a lone deer walking in toward me from the other side of the valley. I watched as it crossed the little stream and came up the bank on my side. As it got closer I could tell it was a legal buck.

The wind was in my favor, and the buck wasn't aware of my presence. About a third of the way up the bank he turned left and stopped behind a large tree. One more step exposed his shoulder area. At a distance of 50 yards the slug hit directly behind the shoulder. The deer took one leap and was dead when it hit the ground.

He had a 10-point rack, and during his escapades he had broken off eight of the 10 tines, each about two inches above the beam. Whether he had been hit by an auto, got his antlers caught in a chain-link fence, or broke them while sparring with



another buck are questions that will remain unanswered while the antlers hang on my game room wall for all to ponder.

Readers may be asking why I've yet to mention any spikes or forkhorns. The truth is that I have yet to see a buck in this area with less than eight points. Conditions here are obviously adequate to provide 18-month old bucks with exceptional antlers.

Some Drawbacks

There are some drawbacks to hunting here. Rifles aren't allowed: firearms are limited to shotguns and slugs. There's none of the flavor one gets by spending time with family and friends at a hunting camp. There's no one to swap stories with, no one to share in successes and failures. As a friend of mine puts it, "If you're hunting locally and alone, it just doesn't seem like hunting."

Where and how a person hunts is a personal choice. For me, the experiences and success I've enjoyed in Allegheny County leave little to be desired. I'll continue to do most of my deer hunting near home, in the semi-developed areas flanking the Pennsylvania Turnpike.



1992 SPORT ESSAY contest winners are flanked by Pete Duncan and President George Miller. From left, Adam Lauper, Brian Yingling, Michelle Johnson, Eric Singer and Brad McClain. Absent was Brandon Carter. The third annual contest brought essays from more than 150 students across the state.

1992 SPORT Essay Winners

THE GAME COMMISSION honored six special young people at its April meeting. The six, finalists in the annual SPORT Essay Contest, were chosen from among more than 150 students who submitted essays.

The theme of the 1992 competition was "What I Can Do to Improve Sportsman/Landowner Relations." The essays could be no longer than 150 words. Awards were given in senior (16 to 18 years old) and junior (12 to 15 years old) categories.

Brad McClain of Lititz captured the honors in the senior category this year. The Warwick High School junior was awarded a Savage Arms .270 bolt-action. Adam W. Lauper's essay was judged best in the junior category. The Hollsopple resident, a seventh grader at Conemaugh

Township High School, received a Savage Arms .22 Hornet/20-gauge firearm.

Brian A. Yingling, 18, of Pittsburgh, won a New England Firearms 20-gauge for his senior division second-place finish. He is a senior at North Allegheny High School. Michelle L. Johnson, 12, Douglassville, placed second in the junior category. The Daniel Boone High School seventh-grader received a 20-gauge H&R for her entry.

Brandon L. Carter, 17, Carmichaels, won third in the senior division. The Carmichaels Area High School senior got a pair of Tasco binoculars. The same award went to Eric Singer, a 13-year-old Butler resident, for winning third in the junior division. Singer is a seventh grader in the Butler Area School District.

The winning essays in the senior and junior categories appear on the next page.

What I Can Do to Help Improve Sportsman/Landowner Relations

By Adam Lauper

JUNIOR DIVISION WINNER

MY FIRST DAY HUNTING was two years ago on a farm with my granddad. We were greeted like old friends by the owner. I was amazed by this and soon realized my hunting buddy had made this friendship long before I had come along. I was proud of the fact that after hunting, we shared stories about “The one that got away” and left with a handshake and a smile, knowing that we were welcome to return. It was a great hunt that day and my first experience of what true sportsman/landowner relationships are all about.

I believe I can make a difference, now and in the future. It’s my turn to make friends and improve relations. Many landowners do resent hunters because of past abuse. I must always ask permission to hunt, accept the owners’ decision and respect his point of view. My courteous conduct and attitude during my visit could influence his decision on future hunts.

I will respect him, his family and his property. Simply controlling my dog and parking correctly are signs of my cooperation. I must use good judgement at all times. Honoring the owner’s right to privately hunt on his own land is my concern. I must set a good example by restricting my hunting party size, sharing my game, limiting my visits and hunting elsewhere on opening days. My actions must speak louder than my words. It’s my goal to prove to him that I’m trustworthy and that he would prefer me, a safe and responsible sportsman, over crop damage, broken fences and an over population of wildlife.

I must know, understand and obey all game laws. I’ll work hard to improve sportsman/landowner relations and encourage others to do the same . . . one person can make a difference!

By Brad W. McClain

SENIOR DIVISION WINNER

TO HELP IMPROVE sportsman and landowner relations, I would first obtain permission from the owner of the land to hunt on his or her property and get specific instructions if there were areas which they did not want trespassed. I would tell them exactly what particular animal I was hunting or trapping.

I’d hope to get to know them as best as possible to become a friend. This would benefit both of us, as I would try to alleviate their crop loss by reducing the game that is causing damage, and hunt only those types of game that the landowner wishes. I would let the owner know specifically what days I would be hunting on his land.

While hunting on the owner’s property, I would definitely not litter or cause damage to the trees, crops, fences, or anything else belonging to the owner and nature. I’d always keep in mind where the livestock are grazing and the location of all buildings and persons, and never walk through or drive motor vehicles into or through planted crops or across any other lands the owner restricts.

It is also important to obey game laws while hunting on private property, and to double check the calendar to make certain that you are hunting the proper game on the proper dates.

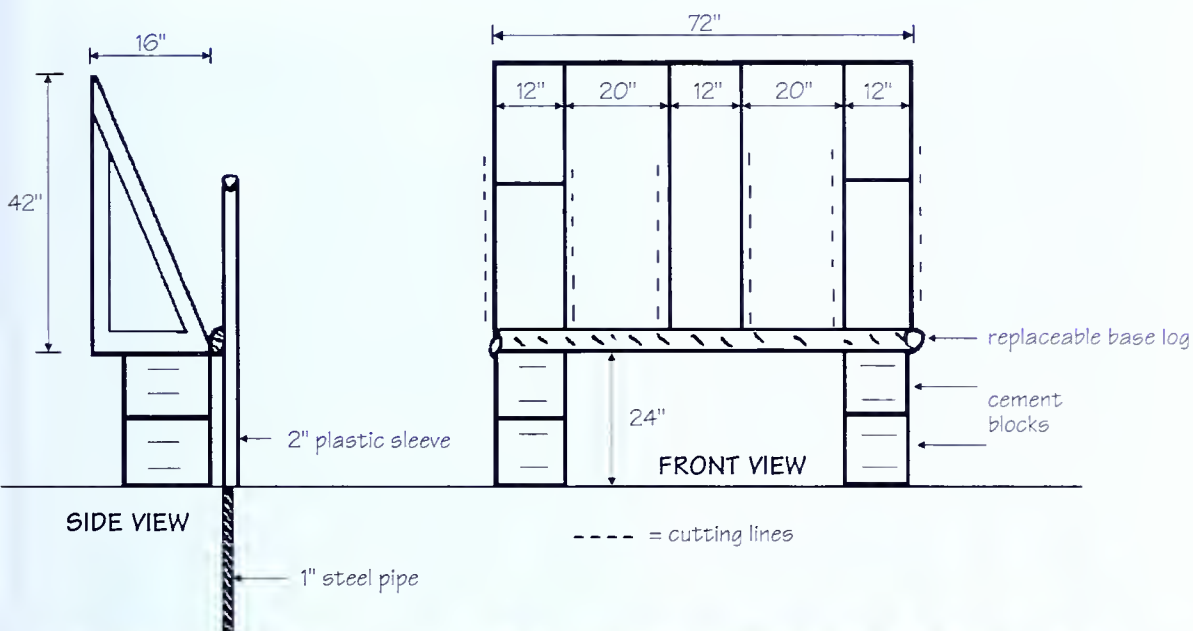
I would also offer to help the landowner with his chores. Since most good hunting spots are located on privately owned land, a few days of helping the farmer make hay or harvest crops would not hurt anyone. A few days in the hay will make your fall hunt more enjoyable when you meet a smiling face on hunting day. By showing the landowner you not only care about hunting on his property, but also care about his property and problems, you send a message that hunters can be trusted.

Lastly, if I was fortunate enough to have a successful hunt, I would certainly offer to share my game with the proprietor.

A Woodcutter's Rack

A rack of simple construction can greatly increase the safety and efficiency of camp woodcutting chores.

By Don Anderson



The rack can be constructed of sawmill lumber, discarded boards or small logs found in the woods. The vertical ribs are spaced to provide uniform log lengths, based on camp needs. The device, in this case, is supported by two tall stumps in the back and cement blocks in front. The 1" steel pipes are a safety measure that prevents logs from kicking out. The 2" diameter PVC pipes keep the chain saw from accidentally touching the steel pipes.



Anderson and his crew found that trees felled and cut into 8- to 10-foot lengths worked best. The logs are stacked on top of each other on the rack and then cut to the desired length.

One of the major advantages to the rack is its safety. Because it doesn't require someone to feed logs to the sawyer, it's a one-person operation, which means there's nobody holding the logs and running the risk of being injured. Second, the chain saw can cut up to five or six logs without interruption. Production can be tripled and the rewing and idling that robs fuel efficiency is

largely eliminated. Also, because more than half the cut logs remain on the rack, they can be easily loaded onto a wheelbarrow with far less stooping and lifting.

A rack built to the measurements featured here will yield 16-inch pieces by cutting two inches on each side of the ribs. Adjust rib spacing accordingly if longer or shorter pieces are desired.



Woodcutting Safety Tips

- ◆ Much as in safe firearms handling, always wear safety glasses, gloves and hearing protection when operating a chain saw. Kevlar chaps and hardhats are also recommended.
- ◆ Be aware of any bystanders, and advise anybody who may want to watch to stand well back from the cutting.
- ◆ Remember, it is illegal to cut wood on state game lands without a permit. Contact a Game Commission region office for further details.



FIELD NOTES



Excellent Witness

FAYETTE COUNTY — When 13-year-old Harry Burnsworth witnessed the killing of a whitetail fawn last August, he called the Commission. He proceeded to give a good description of the perpetrator and his vehicle — including the license number. Later, when the violator requested a hearing, Harry showed up and provided excellent testimony. I've seen a lot of people testify during my career, but I was amazed at how calm and collected Harry was. He is certainly to be commended for his efforts. — WCO Stanley W. Norris, Fairchance.



Help Out by Staying Out

Bald eagles are again nesting on SGL 180 on Shohola Lake. Two of them have been seen taking turns sitting on a nest that was established last year. One eaglet fledged from that nest. We hope this year will again be successful for the birds, perhaps twice so. Please stay out of the marked propagation area. The eagles can be watched through a spotting scope from the second boat launch or the observation tower. — LMO John C. Shutkufski, Damascus.

Get Ready, People

BLAIR COUNTY — The anti-hunting issue is not new; I remember debating the topic 20 years ago in a college philosophy class. The only thing that perhaps has changed is the sophistication of the anti-hunters. They are now more knowledgeable about many wildlife management issues and more skillful in presenting their arguments. We must be better prepared to face their challenge. Two fairly recent articles I recommend are "The Future of Hunting" by Ted Kerasote (*Sports Afield*, Sept. 1992) and "Is Hunting Moral?" by Ann Causey (*Bugle*, Winter 1993). It's imperative we understand the issues and be able to discuss them intelligently. — WCO Steve Kleiner, Altoona.

Slipping?

SNYDER COUNTY — Last year I wrote a Field Note about 83-year-old Cloney Longer who caught two beavers on his birthday. Well, perhaps Cloney is beginning to slip a bit. This year he caught only one beaver on his birthday, but during the trapping season he took four others — in addition to 183 muskrats, 18 mink, 12 raccoons, 10 possums and eight skunks. — WCO John Roller, Beavertown.

A Meaningful Gesture

GREENE COUNTY — Last February the Venango County Federation of Sportsmen's Clubs held its 18th annual Landowner Appreciation Dinner. It's the group's way of thanking landowners for opening their properties to public hunting. This is a great gesture that more clubs across the state should consider. — WCO Rodney S. Ansell, Rogersville.

Big, Sharp, Pointy Teeth?

ERIE COUNTY — I heard some interesting comments while working the Erie Outdoor Adventure Expo back in March. Our exhibit featured big game, upland game birds, small mammals and a number of wetland species. As I was cleaning some of the mounts, one 4-year-old boy became quite concerned for my safety. It was all I could do to convince him that the animals weren't alive. — WCO Jack Farster, Albion.

No, After You

CRAWFORD COUNTY — A few days following the big blizzard, the melting snow raised the water levels here. One day as I patrolled SGL 213's Geneva Marsh, with the road under about two feet of water, I approached a stop sign at an intersection now underwater. I saw something moving toward me. It was a beaver, which stopped and looked at me as if wondering who had the right of way. — WCO Mark A. Allegro, Meadville.



Out of His Element

MONROE COUNTY — Wild animals have certain habitat requirements, and when they stray from their habitat, problems often occur. I guess the same goes for WCOs. On a recent trip into town, I got a parking ticket. — WCO Thomas M. Smith, Bartonsville.

Spread the Word

WESTMORELAND COUNTY — The new license year, which begins July 1, brings a few important changes — namely the timing of the antlerless license application process and the cut-off date for purchasing a muzzleloader stamp. First-time hunters must complete a Hunter-Trapper Education course before buying a license, and it's important that they take the class as soon as possible if they want either of those licenses. Hunter-ed instructors are scheduling many early classes to accommodate sportsmen. Check with your local region office for class dates, and spread the word to your hunting buddies to get their hunting licenses early this year. — WCO Joseph V. Stefko, Greensburg.

Now *That's* Exciting

BRADFORD COUNTY — Collecting jawbones and embryo data from roadkilled doe is not normally exciting. But recently, as a deputy and I were recording data from one, I lifted a leg, and to my great surprise a house cat came howling out from inside the deer's rib cage. I sort of launched the cat off my boot as I attempted to get away from it, but the cat disappeared none the worse for wear. Now if I can only find the appropriate block on the data form for number of house cats observed. — WCO Richard P. Larned, Warren Center.

Hi Ho

After a little more than a year as a land manager, I've gained quite an appreciation for our Food & Cover crews. My crew of Lee Hoffert, Ron Kunkel, Ron Kressley, William Siegfried, Bruce Ashenfelder and Dave Berner put forth a lot of hard work and skill to execute our land management plans. These men, and those like them across the state, are the backbone of our game lands system, but they're not often recognized. So thanks, guys. Now get back to work. — LMO Bruce C. Metz, Schwenksville.



A Vegetarian?

TIOGA COUNTY — Last winter we were out trapping turkeys where an abundance of mast kept the birds around. While checking the area, I saw a gray fox feeding on corn in an enclosed feeder. Two days later, while watching a flock of turkeys, I saw the fox again. The gray paid the birds no attention as he walked past them, apparently more interested in corn than poultry. The turkeys likewise seemed unconcerned. — WCO Franklin A. Bernstein, Middlebury Center.

Cultivating a New Crop

BERKS COUNTY — Kutztown High School vo-ag teacher Dan Lynch and his students helped replace about 30 wood duck and mallard nesting devices on Lake Ontelaunee last February. Dan's enthusiasm and dedication to our wildlife resources are inspirational to his students. Many have plans to work in wildlife-related fields someday. — WCO Chuck Lincoln, Reading.

Wait and See

Last winter was more severe than any I've seen in probably 15 years. I remember how after the harsh winter of 1977-78, wildlife seemed to respond by producing more offspring. Our grouse populations skyrocketed following that winter, and it'll be interesting to see what happens this year. — LMO R.B. Belding, Waynesburg.

Abandon Ship

While maintaining nesting devices on Lake Ontelaunee last winter, Farm Game Manager William May cut free a mallard nesting device that had frozen into the thin ice. As he placed the hay-filled cylinder in the boat, a muskrat bolted from inside and scampered across the boat. Startled, Bill was greatly relieved that the muskrat jumped overboard before he did. — LMO Stephen L. Opet, Tamaqua.

Surf and Turf

SUSQUEHANNA COUNTY — While helping Waterways Conservation Officer Dick Roberts stock trout in Nine Partner's Creek, I found a new use for my deer rack. We placed buckets of fish on it and drove them to the creek. It certainly made the task easier. I guess I'll have to call it a fish and wildlife rack now. — WCO Charles J. Arcovitch, Kingsley.



Seeing the Bright Side

ERIE COUNTY — While some may consider our increasing coyote population to be bad, I see some benefits. Sportsmen's clubs have been organizing coyote hunts like they used to do for fox, and other hunters have been calling in the animals with some success. Coyotes offer an excellent chance to hunt when nothing else is in season. The coyote is here to stay, so take advantage of it. — WCO Wayne Lugaila, Waterford.

Gypsies Bring New Homes

The first wave of the gypsy moth has swept through our forests, leaving many dead oak trees in its wake. But the infestation has some good side effects. The oak forests are returning to a brush stage, providing better habitat for deer, grouse and other species. The standing dead trees are being invaded by insects, which has created a boom in the pileated woodpecker population. The pileated woodpecker, in turn, has created nesting cavities while searching for food. These cavities will be used by wood ducks, squirrels and other cavity nesters. — LMO James Deniker, Sandy Lake.

Eagle Recovery Success

ELK COUNTY — The past several winters we've been blessed with sightings of golden eagles, and many of us have gotten used to seeing them. But during February's heavy snow cover and frozen waterways we saw only one bald eagle, a welcome sight nonetheless. With the increase in eagle sightings over the past several years, more and more people are beginning to appreciate our eagle recovery program. — WCO Dick Bodenhorn, Ridgway.

Good Try, Though

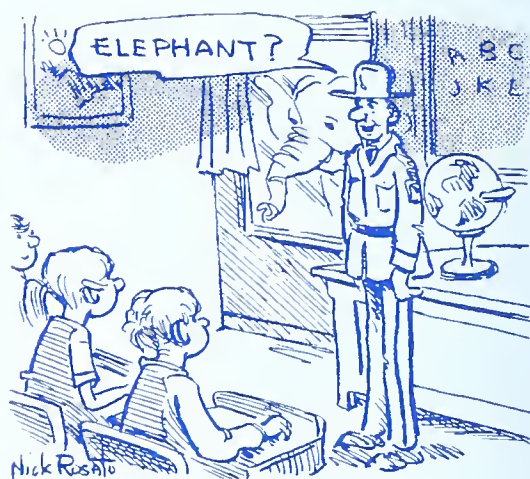
PERRY COUNTY — On a wickedly cold and snowy day, with a 40 mph wind blowing, several deputies and I were in the midst of an investigation that wasn't going well. It seems we were looking in the wrong places. One of the deputies' wives heard us talking on the radio, and because she was familiar with the area she decided to come out and set us on the right path. She jumped into her car to intercept us, but she ran out of gas about two miles from home and had to walk back home. I promised I wouldn't reveal her name, but I wanted to express my gratitude for her efforts. Thanks, Mrs. 434 C. — WCO Leroy Everett, Newport.

Pets Are Killers

VENANGO COUNTY — Spring and early summer is when most wild animals are being born, so it's a time we have to be especially careful with our pets. Wild animal babies are extremely vulnerable to cats and dogs, and it is up to each pet owner to keep his animal under control. Don't let your pets run free, especially now. — WCO Leonard C. Hribar, Seneca.

No Regrets

INDIANA COUNTY — As I write this, candidates for the 22nd WCO trainee class are anxiously awaiting selection. I well remember the anticipation of waiting to be named to the 18th class. That was 12 years ago, and I've never regretted going through the seemingly endless application process. Good luck to the new class. — WCO Melvin A. Schake, Homer City.



Kids Know These Things

JUNIATA COUNTY — Deputy Kevin Mountz and I conducted programs for preschoolers at the East Salem Mennonite school, and I was amazed at the enthusiasm and knowledge the children exhibited. I believe this reflects the quality of instruction and involvement the children are getting from both their teachers and their parents. I was, however, surprised to learn that we have moose, grizzly bears and elephants here. — WCO Dan Clark, Honey Grove.

To the Rescue

ALLEGHENY COUNTY — Late one evening a little while back, a doe decided to go for a swim in a Braddock Hills in-ground pool. But once it got in, it couldn't get back out. I was called to the scene, along with the local police and fire departments. By the time I arrived, though, the firemen had used a fire hose to hoist the deer from the pool. Thanks, guys. — WCO Richard T. Cramer, White Oak.

A Concerted Effort

VENANGO COUNTY — I'd like to thank everyone involved with the Northwest Sportsmen for Youth for their time and effort in making the Youth Field Days a success. What started here in the Northwest has become a statewide program. Local business people like Scott Barefoot, who has provided Field Day T-shirts to the kids for the past three years, make these events possible — as do the men and women who donate their time and effort. — WCO Leo C. Yahner, Franklin.

Show Respect

CHESTER COUNTY — At a recent township meeting, deer control became a major topic. Many landowners complained that hunters had no respect for their property. In a highly developed area such as this, finding a place to hunt is hard. But that doesn't mean you can go on property without permission. Ask first, and if you get turned down, go somewhere else. Every act of disrespect by a hunter is another blow to the future of the sport. — WCO Steven S. Bernardi, Atglen.

File and Forget?

BEDFORD COUNTY — During hunting seasons, field work takes precedence over office duties. After an overdue office clean up session, I found a training school handout titled "Comprehensive Filing System for WCOs." I knew it was around here somewhere. — WCO Len Groshek, Everett.



Points of Pride

PERRY COUNTY — Each year I hear about deer still carrying their racks well into winter. On Feb. 10 of this year, several deer ran across the road in front of me. I was surprised to see four of the 11 white-tails had antlers. I wonder where they were during hunting season? — WCO James L. Brown, Loysville.

Justice

SOMERSET COUNTY — A while back we cited a young man for operating an ATV on Commission-controlled property and for failure to stop for an officer. When Commission officers contacted him, the young man's father told his son to sell the ATV so he could pay the fines. It was an expensive lesson I'm sure will be remembered. Owning an ATV doesn't give someone the right to ride on any property other than his own. — WCO Clifford E. Guindon, Boswell.

The Gift of Giving

MIFFLIN COUNTY — Working the Eastern Sports and Outdoors Show makes for a long and exasperating day, but one young boy made it all worthwhile for me. The 8- or 9-year-old lad walked up to our booth and handed me a dime and seven pennies, saying it was to "help wildlife and stuff." He certainly didn't walk away empty-handed, but he gave a lot more than he received. — WCO T.A. Marks, Milroy.



PEREGRINE FALCONS, an endangered species, historically nested on cliff sites. Today, the birds have found a safer haven in our cities. Wildlife experts are using this preference to bring the birds back and at the same time provide an excellent educational opportunity.

Foundation grant boon to peregrine recovery

RECOVERY EFFORTS benefiting the peregrine falcon got a boost recently when the William Penn Foundation awarded a \$50,000 grant to aid urban peregrine hacking and heightened awareness of endangered species issues.

The money goes to the Wild Resource Conservation Fund, which will administer the grant and coordinate funding. The project is a cooperative effort between the Game Commission and the New Jersey Division of Fish, Game and Wildlife.

Commission Biologist Dan Brauning and his New Jersey counterpart Kathy Clark will coordinate field efforts to hack the endangered birds in southeastern Pennsylvania and the city of Trenton, NJ.

Peregrines, considered the fastest birds in the world, have for several years been nesting on bridges spanning the Delaware

River between New Jersey and Pennsylvania. Due to a number of hazards, the nesting success on the bridges has been poor.

The new project will expand peregrine nesting range, improve fledging success and at the same time provide an excellent educational opportunity for urban children and adults.



One of the unique aspects of the joint project is the plan to place video cameras near two of the hacking sites. Public viewing monitors will allow people to watch the hacking activity without disturbing the birds.

New Jersey is taking primary responsibility for educational materials, which will be available at the hack sites.

The eggs required for the project are coming from bridge nesting locations on spans between Philadelphia and New Jersey. They will be acquired through a process known as double clutching. Eggs from a successful nesting pair are removed; the peregrines will then lay a second clutch.

Alan Pollard, a licensed peregrine propagator from Dillsburg, will then

incubate the eggs. Using a captive peregrine female, the nestlings will be reared until they are old enough to be moved to the hack sites. The aim is to place a minimum of three birds at each hacking site.

This process was used successfully last year in downtown Harrisburg when the Game Commission placed three chicks on a hack site atop a bank building. Two of the three successfully fledged; the third was injured and is now in captivity.

This year the program will be expanded to include sites in Reading, Trenton and again in Harrisburg.

In a separate hacking program, the Commission and the city of Williamsport are planning to hack peregrines at a downtown site.

Agency officers make Governor's 20

WCOs Skip Littwin and Gary W. Packard of the Harrisburg office have once again made their way onto the Governor's 20 list of the top law enforcement marksmen in the state.

Law enforcement officers from across the state submit their top four match scores to qualify. Scores must

be posted through NRA-sanctioned police combat matches. Littwin's 1478.25-80.5X out of 1500 ranked ninth in the state. Packard placed 12th with a 1472.25-74.75X.

Both officers were also members of the top Pennsylvania Police Combat Association four-man team.

Middle Creek, Pymatuning lectures underway

Lectures at the Middle Creek Wildlife Management Area Visitors Center, located near Kleinfeltersville, begin at 7:30 p.m.

Scheduled for the next several weeks are "Undiscovered World of the Butterfly" by consulting naturalist Rick Mikula, June 16-17, and "Edible Wild Plants" by educator Kermit Henning, July 7-8.

Lectures at the Pymatuning Wildlife Management Area Visitors Cen-

ter, located near Linesville, begin at 2 p.m.

The schedule through the beginning of July includes: "Trap and Transfer of the Black Bear" by WCO Ernie Taylor, June 26; "Bald Eagle" by Pymatuning staff, July 3-4; "Snapping Turtles" by agency Wildlife Technician Chuck Toma, July 10; and "Rare and Endangered Flora and Fauna of the French Creek Valley Area" by LMO Rob Criswell, July 11.

PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES who require special assistance at Game Commission public functions should contact the telephone number listed with the announcement, the appropriate region office or the Harrisburg headquarters. Toll-free numbers for each region are listed in every issue of *Game News*; the Harrisburg number is (717) 787-4250.

Pennsylvania Game Commission 25-Year Club

Pennsylvania Game Commission personnel have compiled an enviable record among public and conservation agencies for longevity of service. Few organizations in any area of endeavor can boast so many dedicated employees. Featured here are the most recent PGC employees to complete 25 years of service.

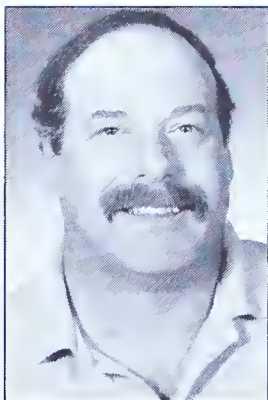


William A. Bower
WCO, Bradford Co.
Troy

Charles Campfield
Equipment Operator
Hawley



Darryl R. Dunkelberger
Surveyor
Sinking Spring



Leroy Everett
WCO, Perry Co.
Newport

Junior E. Foster
Labor Foreman
Gaines



Edward N. Gallew
WCO, Bradford Co.
Wyalusing



Leonard L. Harshbarger
Federal Aid Supervisor
Northeast Region
Sweet Valley

Dan W. Jenkins
WCO, Somerset Co.
Somerset



Eugene L. Johnson, Jr.
Labor Foreman
Phillipsburg



James M. Kazakavage
WCO,
Northumberland Co.
Sunbury

Kenneth H. Krah
Clerk 3
Northcentral Region
Hughesville



Dianne R. Littwin
Clerk-Typist 3
Southeast Region
Hummelstown

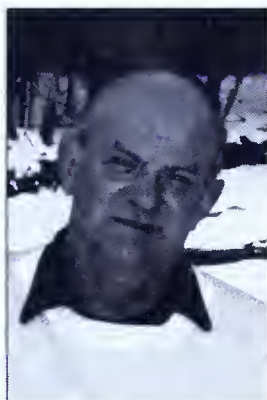
Denver McDowell, Chief
Environmental Impact
Assessment &
Mineral Division
Harrisburg



Robert F. Miller
Food & Cover Corps
Ulysses



Raymond E. Murphy
Game Propagator 2
Williamsport



Jack D. Moore
Labor Foreman
Tidioute

Marlin D. Newman
Labor Foreman 2
Port Trevorton



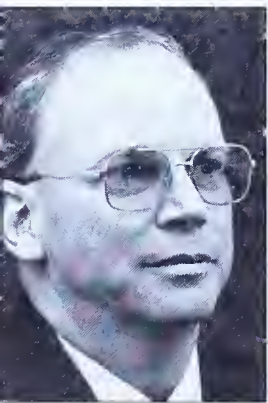
Suzanne M. Phillips
Clerk-Steno 3
Bureau of Land Mgmt.
Carlisle



Alfred N. Pedder
WCO, Forest Co.
Marienville



James E. Rankin
WCO, McKean Co.
Port Allegany



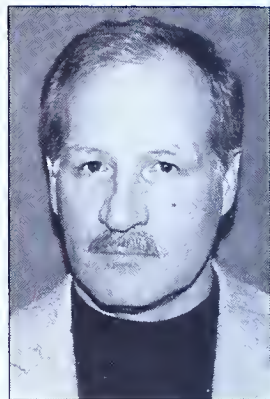
Barry K. Ray
Land Mgmt Officer
Rockwood

Frank W. Rodgers
Food & Cover Corps
Guys Mills



Jacob F. Serfass, Jr.
Land Mgmt. Officer
Gouldsboro

James P. Shook
Land Mgmt. Supervisor
Southcentral Region
Huntingdon



Randy Shreckengost
Game Propagator 2
New Bethlehem

Joseph E. Snyder
Labor Foreman 2
Corsica



George B. Thomas
Chief, Real Estate Div.
Bureau of Land Mgmt.
Mechanicsburg

John K. Weaver
WCO, Centre Co.
Bellefonte



Elizabeth R. Williams
Supervisor,
Game News Circulation
Harrisburg

Leo C. Yahner
WCO, Venango Co.
Franklin

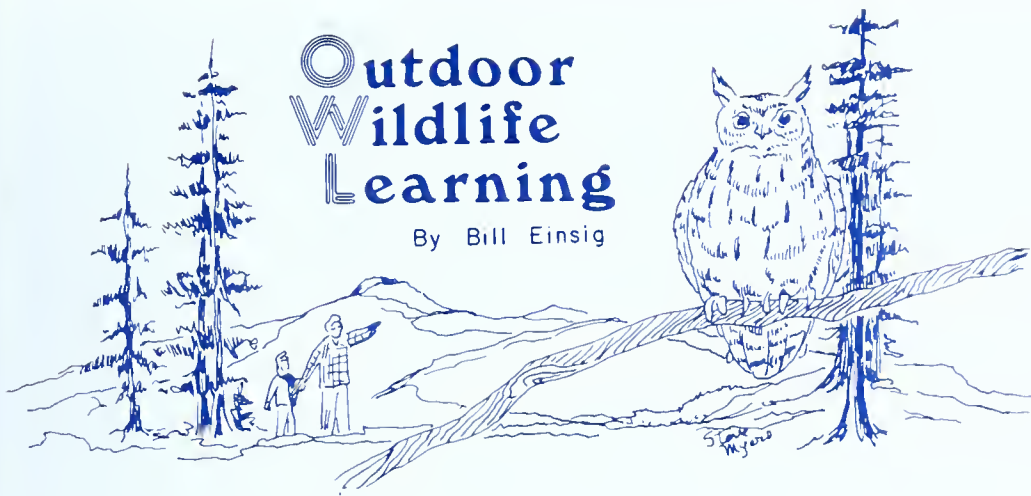


Gerard J. Zeidler
I&E Supervisor
Northcentral Region
Williamsport

In addition to those pictured, also making the "25-Year Club" are Harvey Fouse, Labor Foreman, Newport; Charles Campfield, Equipment Operator, Hawley; Dennis Bernhardt, Federal Aid Supervisor, Northcentral Region, Williamsport; and Harry Richards, Southwest Region Director, New Florence.

Outdoor Wildlife Learning

By Bill Einsig



Gypsy Moths & Forest Fires

Dear Mr. OWL,

What can I do to stop gypsy moths from killing all the oak trees? The damage to the environment seems inestimable. — C.C., Frackville.

Dear C.C.,

There's no question that the gypsy moth has caused much damage to Pennsylvania's forests. In fact, it's difficult for most of us who are not trained natural resource managers to fully understand the extent of the loss and the difficulty in estimating it.

It's also logical, to me at least, that people who care for the outdoors may not necessarily agree on the seriousness of, or solutions to, resource problems. Managing a resource used and loved by so many is never easy. Perhaps the best we can do is try to understand the problem as specialists interpret it for us, rather than letting our emotions control our attitudes. Some things are not as bad as they appear.

Quite a few years ago, I drove north out of Snowshoe in Centre County and headed through Karthaus and Piper toward the Quehanna Wilderness Area, where Elk and Cameron counties meet Clearfield. Large tracts had been cut on that plateau, and I remember being shocked at the sight of what appeared to be total devastation. What trag-

edy could have so totally destroyed this once beautiful forest?

I later learned the area had been salvage cut, following in the wake of the oak leaf roller — a native insect pest that periodically kills significant tracts of forests. What appeared to have been total desolation is today well on its way to becoming a new forest, perhaps a bit different from the one that had been killed and salvaged, but a new forest with food and cover for wildlife.

Another memory that helps me put the present condition of Pennsylvania woodlands into perspective is a story from a retired friend whose family farmed near Emporium. He has helped me understand the mountains in ways flatlanders like me rarely can. This friend told me that as a young boy in the early decades of this century, he and his friends would use the stumps of cut hemlocks and white pines as stages for plays and skits. Imagine a tree stump so big that several kids at a time could stand on a stump and act out some childhood imagination. Not on the stumps I grew up with.

It wasn't only the size of those stumps that impressed me, but also the fact that to be that big those trees had to be very old. They had been cut at the turn of the century for lumber, or maybe for their bark. In place of what had been a rich, old growth of pine and hemlock

came a mix of maple, beech and birch with assorted other species and smatterings of conifers.

These are the forests we have today, and in many areas of the state, the new forest grew into almost pure stands of oaks. Actually, that so many of these stands are predominantly oak is a major reason the gypsy moth has spread so rapidly and with such serious effects.

Today the gypsy moth continues to eat its way across the state. It's now found throughout the state, although damage is not equally severe in all areas. Of Pennsylvania's nearly 17 million acres of forest land, 8.5 million acres are moderately to highly susceptible to gypsy moth due to high concentration of oaks. Regardless of our efforts, this imported pest will continue its assault and, just like the excessive cutting of the last century, will change our forest once again.

Last year, the Department of Environmental Resources Bureau of Forestry sprayed 119,640 acres with Bt, a biological spray containing bacteria that infect the gypsy moth larvae. It also sprayed 85,121 acres with the chemical insecticide Dimilin. This year plans call for treating 29,961 acres with Bt and 78,857 acres with Dimilin. These sprayings are designed to relieve the pressure of high gypsy moth concentrations in some areas near people and to protect wooded areas of high value. No spraying is done in hopes of eradicating the pest. That was recognized as a losing battle years ago.

The bureau also released a new species of

wasp, *Rogas lymantriae*, in seven counties last year. It is hoped this wasp will become an established parasite of the gypsy moth. Currently there are eight species of insects, seven wasps and one fly, that were imported from the gypsy moth's home territory and are now commonly established in Pennsylvania. Most of these were released in New England in the early 1900s and have since spread into our state.

Ultimately, the gypsy moth will likely become just one of several pests that infect our forests. We will never exterminate it, but with enemies of its own and a changing forest type with more resistant trees, it will come under some control, probably with only periodic serious outbreaks.

In other words, the gypsy moth is here to stay. We have to learn to live with it and with the changes it will bring. At the same time, we should remember that all things are in a constant state of change. Even the forest we now see changing was itself the result of massive environmental damage we caused a century or more ago.

Getting to Know Wildland Fire

During the summer of 1988, massive fires burned nearly 800,000 acres in Yellowstone National Park. The fires raised a controversy among professional foresters and citizens throughout the United States. While fires plague forest lands of the West every year, none raised the fire consciousness of Americans like those highly publicized fires in Yellowstone.

Special Book Offer From WRCF

Pennsylvania's Natural Beauty is a recently released coffee-table book featuring stunning photographs by Blair Seitz and evoking essays by Ruth Seitz, and it's available free, through a special offer by the Wild Resource Conservation Fund (the state check-off fund for wildlife). Native Pennsylvanians with several books to their credit, the Seitzes spent the better part of the past 10 years exploring the wilds of our state forests and parks and game lands. Presented in this deluxe hardcover volume are 120 full-color photographs — ranging from intricate close-ups to spanning vistas — and stirring essays, all portraying the best outdoor Pennsylvania has to offer.

Pennsylvania's Natural Beauty is available in local book stores — as are *Susquehanna Heartland* and *Amish Ways*, also by the Seitzes — or free, just by making a contribution of at least \$30 to Pennsylvania's Wild Resource Conservation Fund, Box 8764, Harrisburg, PA 17105-8764. Allow three to four weeks for delivery.

Now, five years later, the burned areas are mending, regenerating a new forest where many feared there would be only lasting devastation. The fires of Yellowstone actually emphasized our ignorance of fire as not only a destructive force but as a natural component of many systems, as well. Teachers need to incorporate this new appreciation of fire into their own understanding and teaching about natural systems. There are ecosystems on this earth that do not contain only clover, rabbits and foxes, living in harmony with the water cycle. There are systems where fire is not just a regular visitor but a necessary component.

The National Park Service has published a number of materials that help students understand the Yellowstone fire and, more generally, about the role of fire in nature.

Expedition Yellowstone! is the most comprehensive of these. It consists of a 260-page workbook filled with activities teachers can use in conjunction with a field trip to the park and its burned areas.

Another booklet of activities, *Getting to Know Wildland Fire*, has a broader application for teachers outside of field trip distance to Yellowstone. This booklet contains eight activities that deal with the nature of fire, its control and its effects. It could be used anywhere from fifth grade on up. The booklet contains a colorful poster keyed to several of the activities.

There is no charge for these materials. They are available from Chief of Interpretation, National Park Service, P.O. Box 168, Yellowstone National Park, WY 82190, Attn: Fire Ecology Unit.

Fun Games

“It’s Tree Time”

By Connie Mertz

Match each tree with the correct information given on the right.

- | | |
|---------------------------|---|
| 1. ____ Eastern Larch | K. Identified by five bunches of soft long needles. |
| 2. ____ Common Sassafras | M. Nicknamed the “camouflage tree” because of its two-color bark. |
| 3. ____ American Sycamore | H. Losing its needles in fall, this cone-bearing tree is not an evergreen. |
| 4. ____ Yellow Birch | E. Having a spicy odor, leaves on this shrub come in three different shapes. |
| 5. ____ Red Pine | L. Peeling the ragged ends of this bark in strips, even in wet weather, can provide a warm, life-saving fire. |
| 6. ____ White Oak | O. Growing in clusters of two, this pine has long, dark needles that snap easily when bent. |
| 7. ____ White Pine | C. Producing acorns, it’s one of the most common mast trees in Pennsylvania. |

If your answers are correct, the letters should spell Pennsylvania’s state tree.

answers on p. 64



STEINER'S definition of "improved" property includes land that is reverting to the wild, the opposite interpretation of the taxing authority's.

Improved?

BACK IN SCHOOL, I remember reading books about the future, or at least what some authors predicted or warned would be the shape of things to come. In the future "brave new world" even language would change, they said, in insidious ways. Meanings would be juxtaposed, love would mean hate, kindness, cruelty, war, peace. It's reassuring to know that 1984 has come and gone without the predicted paranoia.

But perhaps some things have come true. I was thinking this the other day, when I received my tax bills. They were for two pieces of property I own, one "Improved" the other "Unimproved." I own an acre lot, with a house and garage, and some 20 acres of adjacent hillside, stream, and wetland bottom.

The first is a regular suburban yard, mowed grass, buildings, and landscape

plantings. The larger piece is my bit of the natural world, where the wild and untrimmed flourish as they will. Of the two, the uncivilized property is my favorite. It's more interesting to the eye and more valuable to the heart.

Not so to the assessor. The built-up lot is considered "Improved," and taxed higher;

Another View...

by Linda Steiner

the acres of woods and water are "Unimproved," and cost me less. It's not that I think I should pay more for the bigger piece of property; it wouldn't sell for much on the real estate market, but I object to the nomenclature. Since when is land improved by building on it?

In my childhood memories there is a farm, where not only market vegetables grew. There were pheasants, bluebirds, rabbits and wood frogs. It was a green and living place, in the cultivated rows and the wild corners. The property has long since been "improved," but to my mind it certainly isn't better.

We should have held a wake. The land was killed and buried, entombed in concrete. All that lives upon the land now are mall shoppers. All that grows are store profits. At one time the land and the soil produced life — they were life. I cannot drive past the property without feeling sadness, as if a friend had died — which, in a way, is what happened. "Improvement"? I think not.

But this, in today's thinking, is "progress," is "development." More double-speak. How can covering the earth with asphalt and concrete and constructing atop it be "progress"? To me, the word "development" always had the shade of meaning of becoming something better, fuller. It's a skewing of the definition that clearing the land of all living things, scraping it until it's just a sterile base, and building on it to suit arbitrary human wants is "development."

A portion of the Earth, to my mind, should never be seen as a blank, empty space on a surveyor's map or architect's drawing, in need of filling up. Look away from the paper and into the landscape, and there's plenty to be seen. What's more, I guarantee it will be beautiful already.

Of course, even I live in a home where once there were woods, probably a mixed forest of oaks and maples, with mayapples and wild violets. Our society has to have houses, businesses, schools and churches, even places to drive and park our cars. But let's call it what it is, not "progress," not

"development," but "urbanization," as country becomes more like city.

If all this building were truly "progress," then downtown Manhattan, or maybe the Bronx, would be everything a country crossroads strives to be. When we gain a place to live, learn, work, or worship, let's at least admit there is something we have lost, some diminishment of the wild world.

I like to think I've minimized the unnaturalness of my home lot to where I can agree with the tax assessor that it is "improved" over the state in which I bought it. I've planted additional trees and bushes and reduced the area that is in the monoculture of grass. Many of my plantings bear flowers for bees, butterflies and hummingbirds, or berries and nuts for squirrels and songbirds.

I've put in hemlocks and pines for predator protection, mostly from the neighbors' cats, and as a haven for chickadees and cardinals on cold winter nights. Because there are no hollow trees in my yard, and I wouldn't sleep soundly knowing one was teetering over my roof, I've put up nest boxes for the squirrels and house wrens.

I've let the edges go natural, even encouraged the blackberry, milkweed and jewelweed because I know they're used by the wildlife that visits the yard, and because I like to see the things that grow up naturally. As a reward, I get deer trimming the bushes occasionally, watch rabbits lazing among the clover, and pileated woodpeckers drumming next door. I have taken away from the wild world, but I have tried to give a portion back.

I intend to "improve" my "unimproved" property, but not in the way the tax office would understand. Most of my acreage couldn't be "developed" anyway. It's too steep, too close to the creek, or too marshy. Environmental laws wouldn't allow it, and I agree. There are some lands that are just not meant to be built upon, including the property I own. I think the land's fine just the way it is, with maybe a few alterations.

I'd like to "develop" more evergreen cover on the site, maybe put in some of those hybrid chestnut trees and a few berry

bushes and crabapples to encourage the deer, squirrels and turkeys.

On the flat, I plan to erect some wood duck nesting boxes, and maybe several smaller ones to attract swallows or bluebirds. If I could get bluebirds to nest, that would indeed be "progress."

I keep hearing, "There's no stopping Progress" — with a capital "P." True, there's no foreseeable end to the human population expansion, or our ever-increasing needs and wants that gobble up land. But perhaps it's time we became discriminating about why property use is being changed, and whether it's really worth the sacrifice from forest and field to building lot.

Although business enterprise has been the backbone of our economy, maybe we should ask whether we really need another fast food restaurant, or convenience store or gas station, especially right there where the trilliums bloom so profusely, or the flickers have annually raised a brood?

In the state today, even in my own area, there are plenty of "developed" properties

no longer being used. Failed businesses, homes that won't sell, parking lots that are sprouting grass between the pavement cracks. Maybe the time has come to encourage reuse, recycling of these already "improved" plots, rather than going into living woodland with the bulldozer and, in effect, killing it.

Why not an incentive to renovate, refurbish, or remove and rebuild on sites that have already been taken out of a natural state? It's certainly worth thinking about, and it would keep these properties producing on the tax rolls and adding to the local economy.

My personal definition of "improved" property includes land that is reverting to the wild, the opposite interpretation of the taxing authority's. I like to see an old building that has decayed and collapsed so that sumac is growing up through the foundation and flying squirrels have moved in under the remaining eaves. It's good to know that the land under the manmade structure was not truly dead, but waiting, as the Earth always has, for a future day.



IN RECOGNITION of his untiring efforts to get more kids involved in hunting, trapping, fishing and the outdoors through "Youth Field Day" programs, the Pennsylvania Deer Association — represented here by PDA President Jim Seitz — presented Northwest Region I&E Supervisor Bob MacWilliams with a limited edition fine art print. In addition, to further support Youth Field Day programs, the PDA is donating a fine art print, a Marlin .22 rifle and \$100 to every Youth Field Day program put on in the state.

The worst sin towards our fellow creatures is not to hate them, but to be indifferent to them: that's the essence of inhumanity.

— George Bernard Shaw

“LOOK, over there,” Tom whispered. “It’s a bear.” His two companions spun around and saw a large black bear lumbering out of the woods just 50 yards away.

With a gentle breeze carrying their scent away from the bear, the three men — mesmerized — watched in spellbound silence as it ambled heedlessly along.

When Eli shouldered his rifle and squinted through its scope, Tom thought he was just trying to get a better look. But then, suddenly, Eli’s rifle cracked.

As the bear took off in a rumbling lope, Eli quickly fired again. The bear staggered, lurched forward 20 yards and crumbled to the ground. A few moments later the bear struggled back to its feet and stood up, swaying from side to side like a drunk.

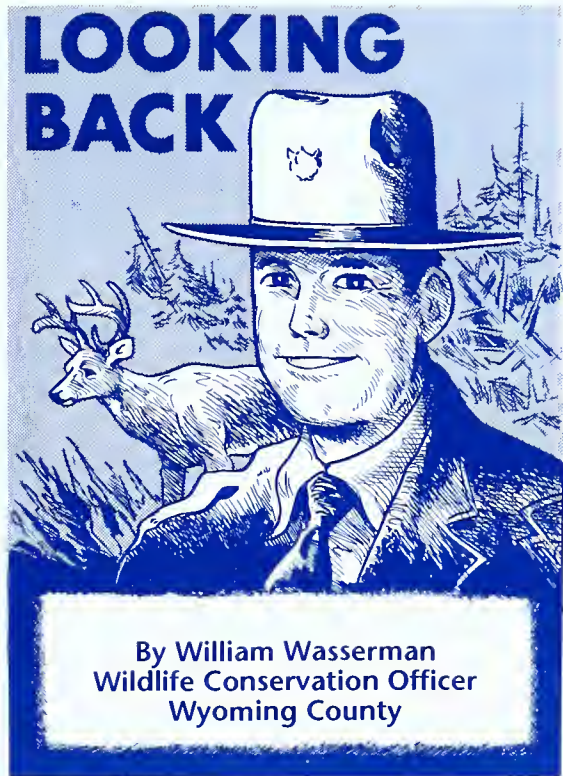
Tom and his brother, Ross, were frozen in disbelief. Another shot rang out before either could utter a word. “Are you crazy?” Ross finally cried. “Stop! Stop shooting!”

Eli never broke his stance, he just kept pumping lead into the bear. Finally the bruin stumbled and, snapping frantically at the air, fell for the last time.

“Are you out of your mind?” Tom shrieked. “What do you think you’re doing?” Eli shrugged sheepishly and stared at the ground in feigned remorse, offering no excuse for what he’d done.

“You may have ridden out here with us, pal, but you’re getting home on your own,” Tom exclaimed. He then nodded sharply to his brother. “C’mon, Ross, let’s call the game warden.” They abruptly marched off, never once looking back. . . .

The sun was beginning to set when the phone rang. I had just returned from a long workout at the gym. It had been



a steaming hot June day, and bear poaching couldn’t have been further from my mind.

“Bill, it’s Richie at the office,” the dispatcher said. “We just got a call about someone shooting a bear in Luzerne County, not far from the Wyoming County line. Can you head out there?”

“Okay,” I said, trying to comprehend that I was about to investigate a bear case five months before the season opened. “Where?”

“Near Sweet Valley,” Rich replied. “I’ll have a Luzerne County deputy meet you at the intersection of routes 29 and 118. They’re with the bear now.”

“Okay, Rich, I’ll head right out. I’ll be there in half an hour.” I hung up and quickly put on my uniform. Within minutes I was in my car, informing the region office I was on my way.

Deputy Marshall Stover overheard us on the radio and his familiar voice crackled through my speaker. “Got anything going? Bill.”

"Affirmative, Marshall. A bear's been shot in Luzerne County. I'm going over there now."

"Want some help?"

"Ten-four," I replied. "I'll stop by your place in a few minutes."

Deputy Stover and I drove south on 29 into Luzerne County. We met Deputy Steve Hanczar at Route 118 and followed him to a dirt road. After traveling for about three miles, we came upon several cars parked near an old, run-down house, and I could see uniformed deputies milling about in our headlights.

Hanczar pulled behind one of the vehicles and I recognized Deputy Weiner standing by his patrol car. He had someone with him.

"Hi, Gene," I said. "What do you have?"

Gene nodded toward the suspect, "That's the guy who evidently shot the bear. He's from North Carolina."

The suspect was dressed in a black T-shirt and jeans. He was barefoot and his clothes were bloodstained.

"Did you search him for weapons?"

"Yes. He's clean."

"Where's the bear?"

"Right behind the house," Gene replied.

Deputy Stover and I walked across the dirt road and trained our flashlights on the backyard of the two-story frame house. The bear carcass was sprawled upon the damp grass, its dim outline at first barely visible in the darkness. It was a male, perhaps 350 pounds. It was then that the impact of the deed hit me like a blow to the chin.

Dismayed, I walked back to the suspect and handcuffed him, then

placed him in my vehicle. Eli Rube, now a prisoner, stared dolefully out the windshield of my patrol car while Deputy Weiner filled me in on the case.

Gene said Tom and Ross Smyth, who lived a few doors away, had invited Rube to go woodchuck hunting. He was new in the area and they wanted to be good neighbors. Having never met him before, they were surprised and shocked at what he had done. Even though they watched him shoot the bear, they still found it impossible to believe. Shaken, they immediately called the Game Commission.

Rube had been in Pennsylvania for only a few weeks. Unemployed, he was living with his girlfriend and her mother. When the deputies arrived at the house after receiving the report, Eli tried to escape out the back door but was apprehended.

I looked back at the house; all the lights were on and two women were watching from a window. A massive bulldog stood menacingly between them — front feet on the window sill — barking in deep, guttural bursts. Elastic ropes of drool hung from its jowls, giving it the terrifying look of a dog gone mad.

I opened the door of my Blazer and peered inside at the suspect. There was the faint odor of something fetid, and I wondered if Rube ever bathed. "That dog in the house, can those women control him?" I asked.

"He's just an ol' bull dawg," Rube replied. "He won't hurt nothing."

I glanced back at the dog. It had to weigh more than 100 pounds, and looked like it could take a few good hits from a .357 before realizing something

Commission 800 Numbers

Within Pennsylvania, use the agency's toll-free 800 numbers to contact a wildlife conservation officer. For the Northwest Region, call (800) 533-6764; Southwest, (800) 243-8519; Northcentral, (800) 422-7551; Southcentral, (800) 422-7554; Northeast, (800) 228-0789; and Southeast (800) 228-0791. Phones will be manned around the clock during the major hunting seasons, and about 15 hours a day at other times.

was up. "What did you shoot the bear with?" I asked.

"My .30-06," he sighed.

"Is it in the house?"

"Yeah, upstairs in my room. You gonna take it?"

"Yes. We need your permission, though. Otherwise we'll get a search warrant."

"Just take it. I don't want any more trouble," Rube said. "You ain't gonna hurt my dawg, are you?"

"I wouldn't think of it," I said.

And not wanting to break my word, I sent Marshall in. Marshall had always told me he liked dogs, but as he disappeared into the house, the nagging thought loomed that all dogs might not like Marshall.

I slid into my car with Eli. "Do you understand that you're under arrest?"

Rube stared out the windshield and nodded. Long black hair spilled to his shoulders in a tangle of slick curls and, with his full beard and thick, wide eyebrows, he looked like a modern-day Neanderthal.

I advised him of his rights and asked if he was willing to talk.

"Might as well," he said in a loose, Southern drawl.

"Why'd you kill the bear?"

Eyeing me much as a child would look at a zoo animal, he replied, "Seemed like the right thing to do at the time."

I stared at him in dumb amazement, trying to imagine how a mind like his functioned in the modern world. But then I suddenly realized it didn't. That, after all, was why he was sitting next to me in handcuffs. "What were you going to do with it?" I pressed.

Rube cocked an eyebrow, turned his head and looked out the windshield, and gazed wistfully into the night. In a sense we were both prisoners, although only Rube wore shackles. For as I sat with him dutifully asking my questions, I, too, was a prisoner — a reluctant captive of his erratic world.

Finally, spelling it out in rudimentary steps, he answered: "First, I was



Question

Is it permissible to shoot blackbirds?

Answer

No. All native songbirds are protected by state and/or federal laws. There is, however, no closed season on English sparrows and European starlings.

gonna skin him . . . then cook him . . . and then eat him."

Man, I thought, this guy is out of his mind. "Didn't it occur to you that bear season might be closed or something?" I said.

Rube shrugged his lean shoulders, then bowed his head as if counting toes. As we sat there, in silence, I became aware that the pungent odor emanating from him was not because of poor hygiene. It was the unmistakable smell of a swamp. Already knowing the answer, I asked, "How'd you get so wet?"

A low, silver moon had worked its way behind us. It appeared as a huge glowing orb suspended eerily over Rube's right shoulder. He looked up, and a thousand sharp glints of moonlight danced on his sleek curls.

"Well," he began, "first I hid the bear in a swamp so nobody would find it. Then, after it got dark, I brought it back to the house."

"Who helped you?"

"Nobody. Did it myself."

"That bear weighs more than 300 pounds; you couldn't have done that alone."

"I said I didn't need any help," Rube protested. "I did it by myself."

"How?"

"I rolled him."

"Rolled him?"

"Yeah, I rolled him into the back seat of my girlfriend's car. She has a hatchback — plenty of room for a bear."

"She let you do that?" I ask incredulously.

Rube shrugged. "I didn't tell her," he said.

I couldn't help but think Eli was lying. I'd handled bears before. Their stout, compact limbs and excessive bulk make them extremely cumbersome. Moving a dead bear, to me, has always seemed like dragging a big sack of rocks; they seem to hang up on every little bump or snag.

"You're not going to tell me who helped you, then?"

Rube shot back with a look of utter disdain, and I knew it was useless to push it.

A flash of light coming from the front door of the house caught my attention, and I watched Marshall step outside with a rifle. Apparently he and the dog had come to some kind of an agreement. I got out of the car and met him halfway.

"You have to see this guy's room," Marshall said. "He's got all kinds of stuff up there: teeth, skins, feet . . . it's pretty weird."

My interest was piqued. Besides, I'd had enough of Eli for one night. I asked Deputy Weiner to take Rube to the local district justice while Marshall and I went back into the house. The women inside — Eli's girlfriend and her mother — allowed us to search his upstairs bedroom.

When I stepped into the room I was struck with horror; seemingly dozens of illegal animal parts were strewn about. A large bobcat skin was nailed to a wall to our left. Protected in Pennsylvania, bobcats must bear a tag from the state or nation of origin. Eli's cat was untagged and, therefore, contraband. Another wall was decorated with dozens of turkey feet and tail feathers, still another contained a collection of alligator feet and teeth. Four bobcat

paws were lying on a shelf from which a string, binding two severed owl feet, dangled. A crude testimony to Rube's mercenary prowess. Guns and knives were scattered everywhere — all high quality stuff — along with an extensive collection of archery and reloading equipment.

"Eli sure likes his hunting," I said. "Let's gather this stuff and head back out."

As Marshall and I walked down to the first floor, Rube's girlfriend was waiting at the foot of the stairs. Her eye makeup was smeared and I could see tear lines on her face. "What's going to happen to him?" she stammered. "Where did those men take Eli?"

"To a district justice to post bail."

"But he doesn't have any money," she said desperately.

I felt sorry for her but could say nothing to ease her sorrow. With her chin quivering in tiny spasms, I thought she was about to break down. Then, in a tone of resolution and hope, she blurted, "I have some money. How much will he need?"

"I don't know. The fine for the bear is at least \$800. Then there's this stuff," nodding at the confiscated animal parts Marshall and I were holding. "There could be some federal violations here — Lacey Act and endangered species violations, perhaps."

She stared blankly at me for a moment, her mouth agape. Her love for the guy was unmistakable.

"I have to go," she muttered urgently. "Where is he?"

I gave her the name and address of the district justice, and she collected her purse from the kitchen table.

Abruptly, she turned. "What if I don't have enough?"

"Well," I began bleakly, "because he's from out of state, he'll probably be put in jail."

"Oh, please, don't let them do that."

"I'm sorry ma'am, really. I can see how you're caught in the middle of this and upset, but killing a bear out of season is pretty serious. Eli got himself

in some trouble here, and he's just going to have to deal with it."

Overwhelmed with despair, her eyes brimmed with tears, she quickly turned and walked out of the house.


Marshall and I followed her to her car, and when she opened the door we could see where Eli had loaded the bear. It looked as though some demented prankster armed with a paint brush and a bucket of blood had, in lunatic glee, smeared the back seats and floor. I wondered if she noticed. If she did, she paid no attention and quickly sped off.

Marshall and I walked back to my Blazer. The deputies had loaded the bear for us. Its carcass dwarfed the deer rack.

For a while we just stood quietly by the bear, stroking its dense fur and marveling at its imposing muscularity. I was spellbound. But it wasn't the bear that affected me — it was the deliberation of its death. Once again, I thought, a lowly poacher had robbed everyone of an opportunity to enjoy one of our most magnificent wild animals.

Eli Rube never did make bail that night. Instead, he spent several weeks in jail until his girlfriend secured enough money to bail him out — paying his fine in full.

I hear Rube has gone south now, and I understand that he's found more trouble there — I'm not surprised.



FLASHBACK

In 1957, the Pennsylvania Game Commission authorized an any deer special archery season of 8 days duration in October. Preliminary reports indicate that the bow hunters bagged 603 male deer during this period. An additional 713 antlerless deer fell to the bowhunters. Comparing the success ratio of bucks taken during this eight day period with the 17-day season for bucks only in 1956 we find that the 1957 season resulted in a success ratio of 1:91 for bucks which is also a record. Considering the well-known fact that antlerless deer far exceed in numbers the legal bucks seen on any day's hunt it is interesting to note that 46% of the total bowhunter's bag was composed of antlered deer. The fear expressed in some quarters that an any deer season would result in a slaughter of does is thus seen to have been needless. It would appear bowhunters as a class are selective when they take to the woods in search of deer.

Deer were taken by bowhunters in all but four of the State's sixty-seven counties. Delaware, Mercer, Montour, and Philadelphia Counties were the exceptions. The highest number of kills was registered in Potter County where archers took 72 antlered and 75 antlerless deer. Forest County was second with 62 antlered and 71 antlerless deer. These two counties accounted for approximately one-fifth of the total bag taken in the State during the special season.

—February 1958

Still-Watching

ONE OF MY favorite activities as a naturalist is what I call “still-watching”: sitting quietly in the woods to observe wildlife behavior. This activity is especially productive in late spring when the forest is filled with animals of all ages.

I don’t use a blind or wear camouflage, and I frequently take notes as I watch, so usually I’m not totally concealed or still. Nevertheless, sometimes the wild creatures see me and sometimes they don’t. And sometimes I see what I expect to see and sometimes I don’t.

Late last May I used still-watching to find and observe a hairy woodpecker’s nest. Hairy woodpeckers are larger and louder versions of downy woodpeckers, with the same white backs, white-spotted black wings, and black and white striped heads. The male, in both species, is distinguished from the female by a small red patch on the back of his head. Hairies are larger than downies, and their bills are much longer in proportion to their bodies.

Inspired by various ornithologists’ accounts of how easy it is to watch hairy woodpecker behavior once you find a nest, I was excited when I heard the unmistakable chirping of nestlings as I walked through a mature hardwood stand near the Far Field. The sound was followed by the loud “ke-ke-ke” calling of hairy woodpeckers.

Ignoring the ear-splitting yells of the parents, I sat down close to the source of the chirping nestlings. The adults’ alarm calls attracted a trio of sympathizers — a male scarlet tanager, a downy woodpecker and a red-eyed vireo. Still the parents kept up their protests as they flew from treetop to treetop. I peered up into each tree in search of a likely nest hole but could not find one. Feeling very much like an owl being mobbed by crows, I finally gave up for the day and left the little family in peace.

The next day I tried again, hoping to find the hole before the parents spotted me. I chose a place 25 feet back from where I had been the day before and tucked myself inconspicuously against a small tree trunk dense with leaves. Almost immediately the parents saw me and started the same loud alarm-calling. But after a few minutes they calmed down. Apparently I was not as close to the nest as I had been the previous day, so I crept back into the forbidden zone and again the parents went wild.

The female’s bill was stuffed with food, but all the while I sat there, she perched above me refusing to feed her nestlings. The male yelled on and on, again bringing in the male scarlet tanager to investigate. But by continually watching the actions of the parents, I narrowed down the possible nest trees to two. It was either a large red maple or an equally large black cherry tree, I



J. G. Gorman

The Naturalist’s Eye

thought, because the parents continually landed, then flew off, the upper branches of those trees.

The following evening I made it to the base of the black cherry tree before the parents spotted me. But although I could clearly hear the nestlings calling, I still could not locate the nest hole. Once again I was driven off by the parents' insistent protests.

Four days later I made still another attempt. Certain the nest was somewhere in the cherry tree, I walked around it, peering up through the thick leaf cover. I heard one parent yelling in the distance, but I finally glimpsed the likely nest hole in a large, broken-off branch about 30 feet up.

Because it was a beautiful, cool, bugless day, I decided to outwait the parents. Surely sooner or later they would forget I was there and resume their feeding. I settled down at the base of a nearby tree with a clear view of the nest hole.

Almost immediately I discovered I was not alone. Curled up at the base of a small chestnut oak tree three feet from where I was sitting was a fawn. Although its nose twitched and its eyes were open, it looked unperturbed by my presence, so I shared my woodpecker watching time with it.

The fawn was an unexpected bonus to my still-watching, lending an aura of enchantment to the experience. After half an hour, the scolding voice of the woodpecker parent faded in the distance and the nestlings resumed calling.

More quiet waiting. Finally the male hairy woodpecker landed below the nest hole and fed a nestling that had poked out its head. This, according to ornithologists, meant that the nestlings were in the final stage of their 28- to 30-day nestling period. Then the male started scolding me and was joined by the female. Again I outwaited them and they both flew off.

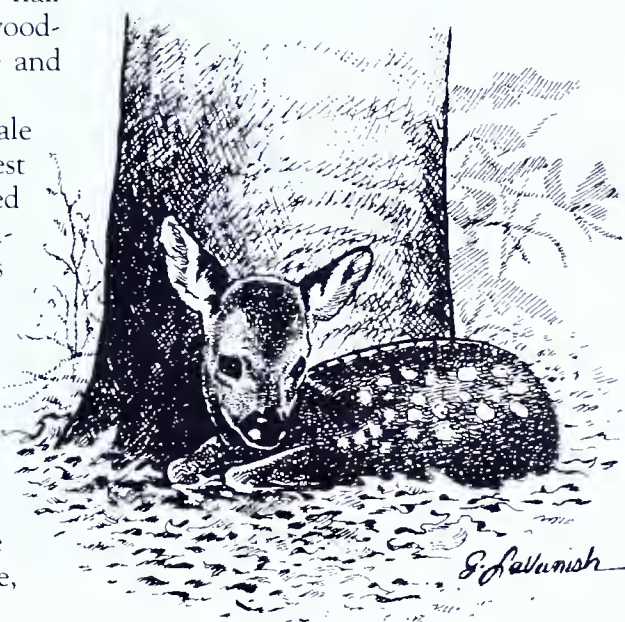
A few seconds later the male returned and fed the nestlings, but he continued scolding me. The female,

apparently more timid than the male, followed his lead and also scolded. In an effort to make myself less conspicuous, I lay flat on the ground, binoculars propped up to my eyes, until my arms went numb. Still they refused to ignore me and go about the business of feeding their begging nestlings. Then I sat up to write some notes. While the female protested in the distance, the male fed the youngsters a third time.

But although I had been sitting there for almost two hours, the parents never relaxed. All the while the fawn remained motionless except for blinking its eyes and twitching its nose. In the end, the woodpecker parents were triumphant. I left them in peace, realizing that even though woodpecker expert Lawrence Kilham had been able to sit in the woods and watch several hairy woodpecker families go about their business, this particular pair was not going to allow me a similar privilege.

My still-watching had not been as successful as I had hoped where the woodpeckers were concerned, but, on the other hand, it had provided me with the unexpected pleasure of spending time with a newborn fawn.

Less than two weeks later, one brilliant June morning, I tried another bout of still-watching, this time in pursuit of an unknown bird call. It sounded like a bird of prey and led me on a merry chase for a



quarter-mile along the Laurel Ridge Trail. But no matter how I tried I could not see that bird.

Finally it called again off in the underbrush. I walked 10 feet into the woods and sat there, my back against a small tree, determined to outwait the hidden bird. Having recently reread W.H. Hudson's *Green Mansions*, I felt a little like the narrator of the story, Abel. The character was led deeper and deeper into the forest by the warbling calls of what he thought was some exotic bird but turned out to be the mysterious heroine, Rima.

The bird that had tantalized me neither called again nor appeared. Instead I heard a rustle over my right shoulder and, by turning slowly, did not startle the doe eating on the other side of a laurel bush about six feet from where I sat. Reluctant to break the spell, I remained in still-watching position.

Gradually I became aware of another kind of noise, that of an animal moving through the underbrush off to my left. It sounded like none of the creatures' movements I can usually identify — turkey, squirrel, deer — so I stayed still, my hopes rising with every foot fall.

Sure enough, a black bear emerged from a tangle of laurel bushes 35 feet in front of my tree and paused to sniff the air several times. The doe, which had continued grazing on the other side of the laurel bush, snorted once and bolted. My still-watching became very still indeed.

The bear low-

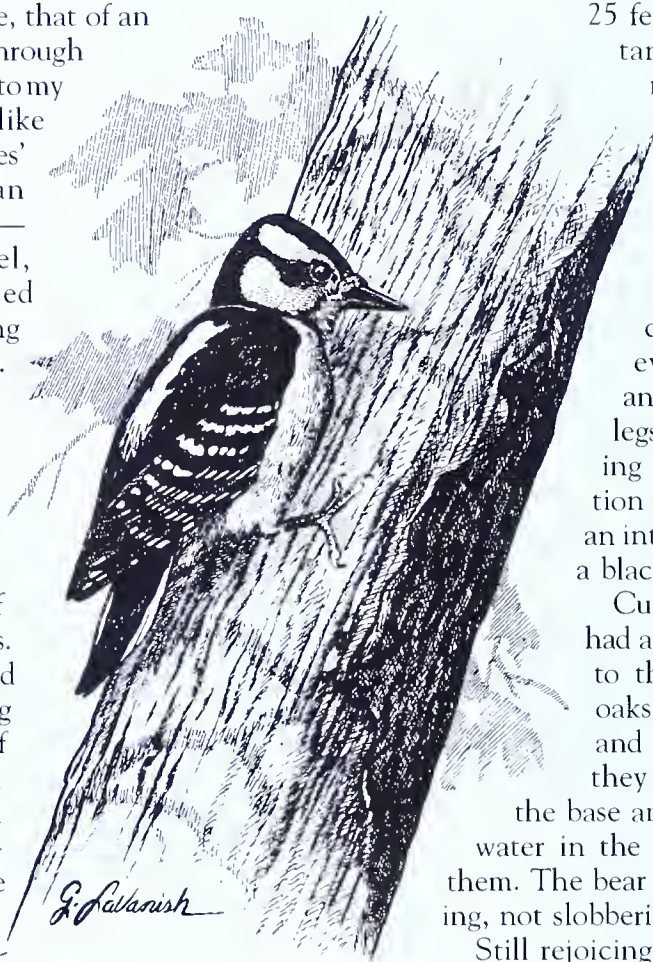
ered its head between two chestnut oak trees and raised it again with what looked like slobber dripping from its mouth. Then it reared up on its hind legs and peered nearsightedly in my direction. Except for a touch of cinnamon on its face, the bear was shiny-black and looked as if it weighed a couple hundred pounds, not the biggest black bear I had ever seen but certainly the closest.

Despite sitting on Laurel Ridge, which is named for the mountain laurel that blankets the area, no laurel or underbrush of any kind grew between the bear and me. So when it started ambling on a direct line toward me, my mind did a quick calculation. Intellectually, I knew that black bears are harmless and run when they see humans. On the other hand, by my figuring, that bear had a good chance of stepping on me. Even a peaceful bear, when startled, might swat first, I reasoned.

So, with the bear a mere 25 feet away, I reluctantly abandoned my still-watching and slowly stood up. The bear halted, then spun around and dashed off. Except for an elevated heartbeat and slightly wobbly legs, my chief feeling was one of elation to have had such an intimate glimpse of a black bear.

Curious about what had attracted the bear to the two chestnut oaks, I walked over and discovered that they were joined at the base and had a pool of water in the hollow between them. The bear had been drinking, not slobbering.

Still rejoicing at my close en-



counter, I continued my walk down Laurel Ridge Trail. Close to the confluence of Laurel Ridge and First Field trails, that same bear jumped up from where it had been resting, off the right side of the trail under a laurel bush 20 feet away, and ran across First Field. This time it had seen me before I saw it — tit for tat.

Then, next to the Far Field Road, a fawn leaped up from where it had been still-watching me and dashed up the slope.

A few seconds later, another one took off three feet from me. Those fawns reacted like I had with the bear, only they had waited until I was quite a bit closer than the bear had been to me before their nerve broke.

Needless to say, my still-watching is not always that exciting. But I rarely come away without a few new insights into the private affairs of the wild creatures inhabiting my Pennsylvania mountaintop.

Books in Brief . . .

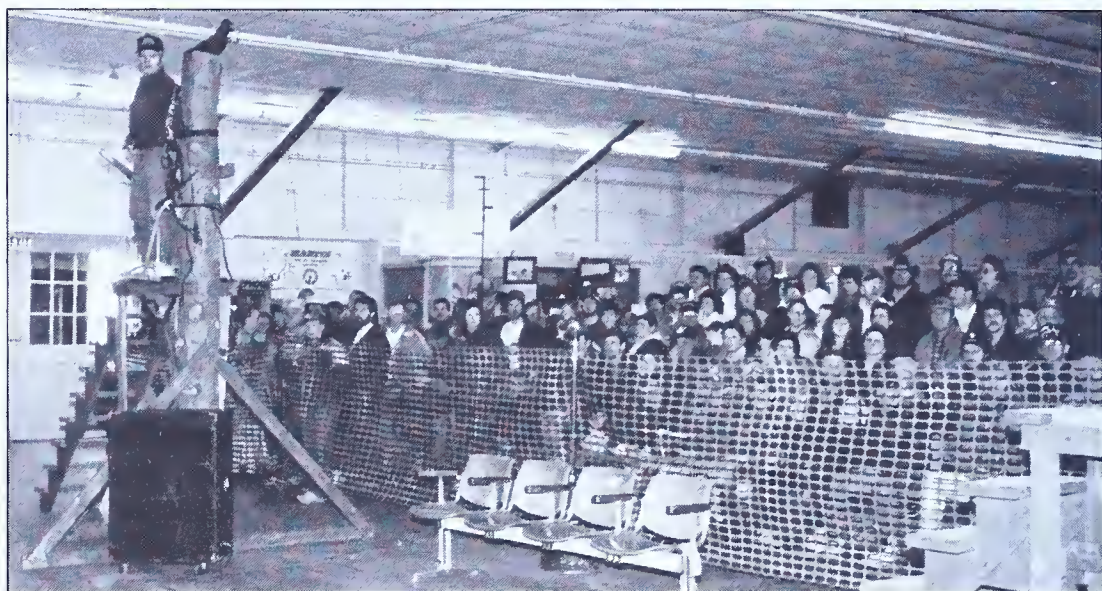
(Order from the publisher, not from the Game Commission)

Loading the Black Powder Rifle Cartridge, by Paul A. Matthews, Wolfe Publishing Co., 6471 Airpark Dr., Prescott, AZ, 122pp., softbound, \$22.50. As most *Game News* readers know, Paul Matthews is a fan of black powder cartridges, particularly the .45-70. In this authoritative gun book, Paul covers every aspect of working with and enjoying these popular calibers from the past, back when metallic cartridge cases and primers entered the shooting scene. Selecting bullet molds and casting bullets, using lubricants, preparing cases and, finally, loading the actual cartridge are all covered in full detail. Paul has put a lot of time and effort into experimenting with these old cartridges, and presented here are not just the loading basics, but also the ideas, opinions and discoveries he's made over the years.

Working in God's Wild Garden, by William A. Bower, available from the author at 153 Redington Ave., Troy, PA 16947, 192 pp., softbound, \$12.60, delivered. Since penning his "Looking Backward" column for *Game News* back in 1988, Bradford County WCO Bill Bower has written three books, and like his previous two (*State Officer, Any Guns or Game and One Man in Green*), this one also is based on his experiences gleaned from his career as a Pennsylvania wildlife conservation officer. The chapters here are derived from his newspaper columns, and woven throughout the text are Biblical passages and other quotes that complement the text and further define how Bill has blended his career with strong religious convictions.

Primitive Pursuit: Stories afield of muzzleloader hunting, by Peter R. Schonmaker, Beaver Pond Publishing, PO Box 224, Greenville, PA 16125, 140 pp., softbound, \$10.95, delivered. Good reading and practical information are interwoven in the author's accounts of his experiences with muzzleloaders while hunting big and small game around his home in the Adirondacks, down here in Pennsylvania and in other areas of the country. Not like many of the black powder books that stick pretty much to the how-to basics, this one includes many experiences by a hunter who's obviously spent a lot of time in the field.

Sporting Collectibles, by J. & V. Karsnitz, Schiffer Publisng Ltd., 1469 Morstein Rd., West Chester, PA 19380, 160 pp., softbound, \$29.95 plus \$2 shipping. Assembled here are full color photographs and detailed descriptions of sporting equipment used decades ago and being sought by collectors today. Although designed for those actively involved with collecting sporting antiques, anybody interested in the history and tradition of the outdoor sports will find this book interesting. Items covered include decoys, handloading tools and supplies, shot shell boxes, target balls, licenses, traps, books, sporting prints and much more. Rather than list prices, because they're often subjective and constantly changing, the authors use a rating system to denote rarity.



ALTHOUGH ARCHERY is not normally considered a spectator sport, the excitement generated by the archery event held at the Early Bird Sports Expo in Bloomsburg last January drew standing-room-only crowds throughout the match.

Outdoors, Indoors

By Keith C. Schuyler

ARCHERY is not usually considered a spectator sport. But tell that to the hundreds of people at the Early Bird Sports Expo in Bloomsburg last January. Although the shooting was intended merely as an adjunct to the rest of the show, at any given time about 200 spectators sat spellbound as the four-man relays took turns vying for awards.

Columbia County, small in size but large in outdoor interest, is a hotbed of archery activity. In addition, the Early Bird tournament brought in shooters from across the state. Some who had qualified for the final day shoot-off had to make an

extra trip back to the Bloomsburg County Fair Grounds.

The spectators, who packed the 120-seat bleachers and crowded the standing-room area during most of the shooting, refrained from making a lot of noise. It was as if they sensed the pressure the competitors were under.

"I could have erected more bleachers," grinned Tom Austin, promoter, "but I didn't want to draw too many people from the rest of the show."

As a spectator sport, archery has a number of drawbacks. In traditional target shooting, the monotonous drilling of paper targets is exciting only to the shooter. At the longer distances offered by field courses, it's difficult for even the shooter to see where his arrows are striking.

While three-dimensional animal target shooting offers spectators more visible and exciting results, it's difficult to accommodate any sort of gallery. And because field courses are laid out with safety in



mind, the paths between stations are often difficult to follow. Even archers must use care to follow signs and stakes placed for their safety, particularly when shooting a course for the first time.

When Austin, an outdoor writer and local radio personality, began the archery event last year, its success was so convincing that the program was expanded. The program is basically geared to shooting at three-dimensional animal targets. James Arner of Millville was given carte blanche to develop something that would appeal to archers by providing an indoor competition with an outdoor flavor, and at the same time attract spectator interest.

To accommodate the course, organizers set it up in a special building at the fair complex. That allowed for easy passage from the main show building. Exhibitors filled leftover space in the range building.

To add an outdoor atmosphere to the event, assistant Boy Scoutmaster Jim Hilner of Jerseytown and his troop provided 54 Christmas trees. The Scouts were paid by area residents to remove the trees, which were then "rented" to the show.

Hay bales, 150 in all, were scattered throughout the target area to catch errant arrows. The bales were actually rented

from an area farmer for this one-time use. Tournament organizers originally intended to buy bales and later sell them for horse feed, but the outside chance of an arrow-head or piece of broken shaft buried in the bales prevented this. The renting farmer, aware of the potential problem, takes special precautions so his animals don't accidentally ingest foreign matter.

Within the resulting "forest" of trees and bales in the 108-foot wide building, 15 McKenzie 3-D animal targets were stationed: white-tailed deer, bear, turkeys and javelinas. The targets have scoring areas of 10 (for a perfect hit), eight and five points. To add realism, turkeys were equipped with a tape recording of a gobble.

Only 12 targets were set up. Each was lighted by halogen spotlights and was clearly visible from any of the shooting positions. The lights and accompanying switch panel were the brainchild of Paul Krebs, a Shamokin electrician.

The panel was programmed so that



AMONG THE shooting stations were four "tree stand" positions, two to six feet in height, that provided shots ranging from 15 to 45 yards. Stan Williams, left, was one of four people charged with keeping scores during the event.

each switch would light one target for five seconds, the time allotted for each shot. Arrows released after the light went out were automatically counted as misses. The operator selected switches at random so contestants couldn't gain an advantage by watching previous shooters.

Target selection was luck of the draw — not all archers got to shoot at all targets the same number of times. The degree of difficulty for the shots varied: One shot might be directly in front of the archer, while the next could be at an abrupt angle across the spacious building or all but hidden in a corner 45 yards away.

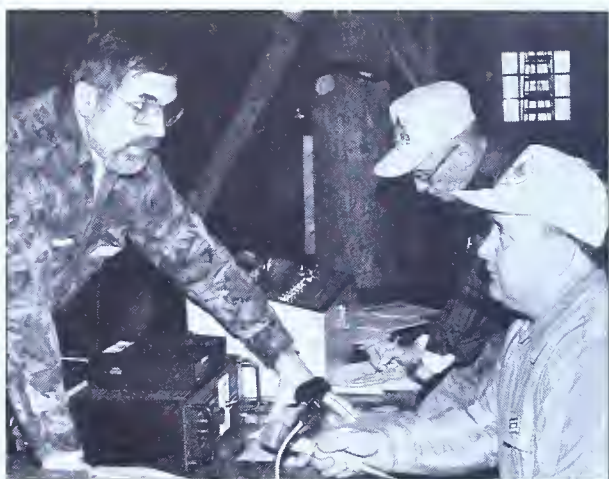
Between shooting illuminations, the shooting area was generally kept in semi-darkness for five seconds. This rapid sequence, interrupted only to permit archers to change shooting stands, kept the program moving rapidly.

For more realism, four tree stands were erected. Arranged in equal distances across the front of the shooting area, each stand provided a variety of shots from 15 to 45 yards. The stands varied in height; two of them were set at two feet, one at four feet and one at six.

Because of time constraints, the number of archers had to be limited to 100. Priority was given to those who had shot in 1992. The event was so popular that 163 people had to be turned down. Although there was no age requirement, those under 18 had to have the signature of a parent on the application.

Preliminary competition was conducted Jan. 27-30. Shooting ran each day from 4 p.m. to 9 p.m. Organizers attempted to assign shooting times with consideration to travel times and work schedules of the many contestants.

Archers got their first-station assignments in a numbered-ball lottery. From their respective starting points, shooters advanced to stations in sequence. The course of fire was 36 arrows, nine coming from the tree stand stations. An archer shot no more than three arrows during his



turn. With four shooters on line, all 12 lighted targets were utilized.

Prior to shooting for score, archers were permitted to shoot six practice arrows. The rules were announced over a sound system that could be heard by the spectators as well as the competitors.

When all archers were in position, the director merely announced, "Shooter number one," and then called on each, by station number, until the last arrow for the round was shot. Archers remained in position while scorers — one for each target — pulled and tallied each arrow. After nine arrows, stations were rotated until 36 arrows were shot.

In the event of equipment failure, the archer was given time to get another bow, but no time was allowed to repair equipment. In one instance, a bow did break, and the owner had a backup available. If there was a malfunction in target equipment, a judgment was made by the director with due consideration for the archer.

At the end of four days of shooting, all 100 scores were tallied. Borrowing from the Lewis system for gunners, these scores were divided into four flights, with the top five at each segment declared winners. For example, those who ranked from 96th through 100th place were declared winners, as were 76 through 80, 51 through 55, and 26 through 30. In this way, those of lesser ability still had the chance to share in the gift certificates given as prizes.

All five winners in the various flights

TOM AUSTIN, LEFT, consults with Jim Arner, who designed the course layout, while Clark Patterson checks scores. Fred Brungart, right, of Duncannon shows his prowess with a recurve.

were invited back for the Sunday shoot-off, but only those five in the top flight could vie for the grand prize of \$500 — even if one in the lower flights should turn in the top score. Officials called eligible shooters the night before the final to notify them that they had made the cut.

During the final, 20 contestants fired 24 arrows, six from each stand. To lessen the chance of a tie, a one-inch fluorescent spot was placed on the exact center of each target's 10-point scoring area. Arrows that struck the spot scored 11 points, and quite a few shafts did just that. Under this setup, a perfect score would be 264, compared to the usual 3-D perfect score of 240. When it was all over, David Smeal of Danville took first place with a score of 219.

All 20 shared in gift certificates and plaques proportional to their final standing. In addition, a drawing was held to award \$50 and \$25 certificates to two of the shooters who failed to be among the 20 finalists. Certificates could be exchanged for merchandise from vendors of archery equipment at the show.

Even regular competitors and spectators of archery events were impressed with the quality of shooting under conditions imposed by the five-second limit and the surprise, random target selection. Surprisingly, in only a few instances did archers completely miss their targets.

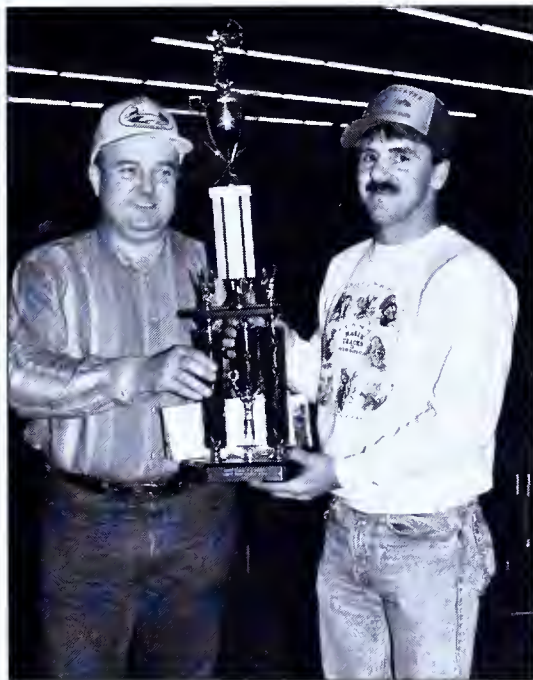
The advantage went to those using fast compound bows with trajectories flat enough, at the relatively short distances, to minimize sighting changes. With one notable exception, all archers shot compounds. One young man shot a longbow and had a respectable score. During a change of flights on Sunday, Fred Brungart of Duncannon gave a shooting demonstration with a recurve bow.

When it was all said and done, Dave Smeal, right, of Danville captured first place, shown here receiving his trophy and \$500 gift certificate from Jim Arner.



Following the Sunday tournament, workers quickly cleared the trees and hay bales from the range. The animal targets, including a display elk, were then auctioned by Stan and Kirk Williams, father and son professionals who are accomplished archers in their own right.

But the big news from the Early Bird shoot is proof that archery can be a viable spectator sport.





WOODCHUCK hunting is a great summertime activity, and it's a sport one can easily adapt to his own hunting preference and equipment. Whether it's stalking within range of a rimfire or dropping one nearly four football fields away with a .22-250, the sport offers a wide range of hunting opportunities.

Varmint Hunting Primer

By Don Lewis

Photos by Helen Lewis

THE SHARP rocks along the edge of a small creek cut into my bare feet and long green briars punched through my thin pants as I tried to ease noiselessly toward a caved-in coal mine that was a den for several large woodchucks. It took five minutes of careful stalking to cover the 75 yards and get within 30 yards of the long-abandoned hand mine. To my dismay, there was no sign of a chuck; my efforts had been in vain.

After 10 minutes of watching, I decided to leave, not because I wanted to, but because it seemed I was being eaten alive by mosquitoes. Just as I turned, a chuck appeared from nowhere, catching me flat-

footed. Since this was my first solo chuck hunt, my heart was really pounding when I realized I was finally face-to-face with my first chuck.

The single-shot Model 60 Winchester .22 rimfire seemed to weigh 10 pounds as I raised it to my shoulder. Sweat blurred my vision, but I locked the open sights on the



LEWIS used a Ruger No. 3 chambered for the .22 Hornet and topped with a Unertl 8x target scope to drop this chuck. The Hornet has long been a popular cartridge among varminters, and it's especially appealing these days for use near developed areas.

chuck's head and pulled the trigger. The gun fired but nothing happened; I figured I had missed. But then, ever so slowly, the chuck slid down the dusty bank and lay still.

That particular episode took place about the time President Franklin Roosevelt made his famous "nothing to fear but fear itself" speech. I wasn't aware of it in 1933, but that seemingly unimportant hunt was the impetus for a dedication to chuck hunting and eventually gun writing.

As a farm boy, I had a good sampling of trapping and small game hunting, but the flame that was lighted the day I shot my first chuck still burns, and the sight of a grizzled chuck frozen in an upright position still sets my heart to pounding.

I'm certainly not suggesting that a person go out and try to make a career out of the sport, but I can guarantee thousands of hours of enjoyment. The solitude and tranquility of a summer evening in a pasture field are nature's top remedies for society's hectic pace. The challenge and precision required to be successful are added ingredients that bring out the best from shooters and their rifles. All this spells pleasure and satisfaction.

When I took up the sport, most woodchuck hunters used nothing more than the ordinary .22 rimfire. The rimfire was very common throughout rural areas. Even people who didn't hunt kept a .22 for varmints — which back then included hawks, owls, crows and rats, as well as groundhogs.

The Long Rifle cartridge is certainly powerful enough to kill a chuck at up to 75 yards, and most shots back then were taken well under that. The .22 Win. Rim Fire (sometimes called the .22 Rem. Special) offered a little more power; it was larger in



diameter and length than the Long Rifle. The .22 Win. Mag. rimfire is essentially an elongated and more powerful version of the WRF.

Back around 1890, the Winchester .25-20 appeared. It enjoyed a good bit of popularity with varmint shooters. But even though the .25-20 was a superior varmint cartridge, ammunition was eight times more expensive than the .22.

.22 Hornet

Both the .22 rimfire and .25-20 lost ground to the .22 Hornet when it appeared in the early 1930s. The Hornet was the first small bore, high velocity cartridge in America designed primarily for varmint shooting. With a muzzle velocity nearly twice that of the rimfire and a killing range of 150 plus yards, it's easy to see why the Hornet took the varmint hunting clan by storm.

The .218 Bee came along in the late 1930s, but it didn't have much more punch or range than the Hornet. Bee fans might dispute that, but their favorite's muzzle velocity is no more than about 200 fps faster than the Hornet. Like the Hornet, 40- to 45-grain bullets work best in the Bee.

The advent of Remington's .222 around 1950 dealt a crushing blow to both the Hornet and Bee. The 3,200 fps muzzle velocity combined with the inherent accuracy of the round gave varmint shooters



DEDICATED groundhog shooters always head afield equipped with a good rest or bipod, binoculars and — note here — ear protection. Eye protection is also highly recommended. Don't forget that woodchuck hunters are required to wear at least a solid fluorescent orange hat.

a 275-yard cartridge with 50- to 55-grain bullets. Some of today's recent loads show the 55-grain bullet hitting around 3,000 fps, which I believe puts the cartridge/load combination in the 300-yard class.

In offering a few tips to new varmint hunters, I want to emphasize that long range shooting is not the paramount goal — at least not at first. The basic philosophy is to shoot only at distances where consistent kills can be expected. In other words, a hunter shooting at 325 yards with a .22 Hornet may eventually score, but it will be more luck than good shooting.

Take Only Sure Shots

I well remember a veteran hunter who was more concerned with clean kills than an occasional hit at long yardage. He was a dedicated Hornet fan who at one time made 26 kills with 27 shots, at distances between 125 and 190 yards. Where he hunted, he knew the distance to each den, and he also knew the trajectory of the bullet at various ranges. And perhaps most importantly, he had learned the correct sight picture from practicing on the shooting range at various distances.

Accuracy was his paramount goal, and he succeeded. I can still see him puffing on an ill-smelling pipe and telling me, "Every one was hit in the neck." To me, he was the epitome of a chuck hunter.

I'm convinced that anybody serious about chuck hunting should also become a

handloader. To be proficient with a rifle requires a lot of shooting from a bench. After 60 years of matching my shooting skills with the wily hole diggers, I can emphatically say that good shots are made on the practice range, not in the field. Precision shooting is the end product of range

testing.

As I became a more proficient chuck hunter I started to connect at long ranges. But I wasn't particularly proud of the shots because the truth of the matter is that I had no idea where on the chuck my bullet might hit.

But while burning hundreds of rounds shooting 5-shot groups at 100 and 200 yards from a benchrest, I began to get a fair inkling of the ingredients needed for bullet placement at long ranges. When I fully understood breath control, trigger pull and concentration on sight picture, my group sizes were cut in half — especially at 200 yards — and I began to get a much clearer understanding of bullet placement.

Handloading is also important because over time the handloader can develop a primer/powder/bullet weight combination that gives top results in a particular rifle. In the process, the handloader gains a lot of shooting experience while on the range. Finally, the handloader doesn't have to spend near the money it would take to shoot the same number of factory rounds.

What is the best cartridge and rifle for someone just starting out? I believe a varmint rifle should be just that, a gun for shooting varmints, not something to be used for all types of hunting. A good varmint rifle should have a heavy barrel and a good trigger. The trigger doesn't have to be super light, but it must be crisp and clean — no forward play or overtravel.

In that respect, a good varmint rifle is much like a benchrest rifle.

Today's varmint hunters have a variety of calibers to choose from. I prefer the .224 and 6mm, but two top long-range cartridges are the .257 Roberts and the Remington .25-06. My choice for the new hunter would be a .223 or .22-250 in a heavy-barreled rifle. Most varmint hunters, I imagine, opt for a bolt action such as the Remington 700 or the Winchester Model 70. Many shooters like single-shots, particularly the Ruger No. 1s. H&R has just come out with a single-shot rifle designed for varmint hunters. The gun is chambered for the .223 and features an exposed hammer.

For years, fixed power 8x, 10x and 12x scopes dominated the varmint scene, but variables offer more and the modern ones don't have many of the problems that plagued some of the older model variables. Bausch & Lomb's 6-24x or Leupold's 6.5-20x are top choices, for instance. I've heard good reports on Tasco's 4-16x and 6-24x. Redfield's 6-18x and Simmons' 6-20x have seen a lot of use on my rifles. For the shooter who wants to use the same scope on a varmint and a big game outfit, one of the smaller power variables such as a Leupold's 3.5-10x or Pentax's 2-8x Light Seeker will work fine in all but the most extreme situations.

Scopes with wide power ranges offer a distinct advantage. Although powers beyond 15x have drawbacks in the field, they are unbeatable for range testing. In one sense of the word, such a variable is like two scopes in one, and that's worth considering.

Binoculars are very important in the pasture fields. Powers up to 10x are adequate for varmint hunting. I like 7x on bright days and 10x on shady days. As power increases so does mirage, the blurry heat shimmer that makes spotting difficult. Because binoculars are useful for many outdoor activities, a person should con-

sider only ones of top quality. Like a scope, a good pair of binoculars is a lifetime investment.

Woodchuck hunting is not just sitting along the edge of a field waiting for a target to appear. Sure, that's the way it's often seems, but dedicated chuck hunters do plenty of investigative work before the first shot is fired.

First, get permission to hunt. Give the landowner your name, address and a complete description of your vehicle. Get specific permission to use field lanes, and park where the vehicle won't be in the way. In many cases it's appropriate to leave your keys in your car so it can be moved if necessary. Don't bring other hunters unless you tell the landowner in advance. Courtesy pays off a dozen times over.

Scouting for chucks is just as important as it is for turkeys or deer. In the spring, before the grass or hay gets too high, or after it's been cut later in the season, check each field for holes. Sketch the locations of holes (not just ones that look fresh), and record the stepped-off distances to each one beyond 100 yards.

Keep Looking

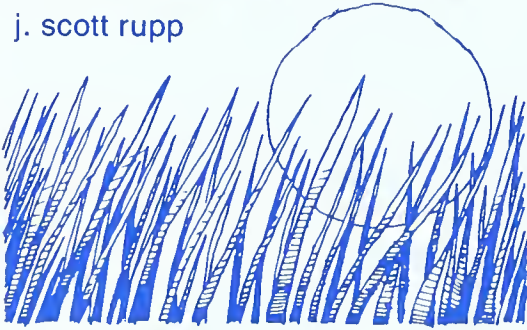
When you set up, stay in the shade if possible. Don't make sudden movements or talk loudly. Chucks become very cautious after a few shots have been fired. Glass the field constantly. Glassing is paramount; the more you scan, the more chucks you see.

Keep in mind that after a field has been hunted several times, chucks aren't prone to sitting up. It takes a sharp eye and good binoculars to spot the head of a chuck emerging from a hole or moving through grass at 250 yards.

The grizzly of the pasture field is no easy target. Success comes from having an accurate rifle, knowing the trajectory of the bullet, and possessing good optics and a sturdy rest — plus plenty of range practice.

In the wind

j. scott rupp



Bald eagle populations are on the rise in South Carolina, still another example of the species' comeback. *Bird Watcher's Digest* reports the state's tally last year was 269 bald eagles, up considerably from the 198 counted the year before. The first bald eagle count was conducted in 1977; only 13 birds were recorded.

State legislators in Arkansas have proposed a sales tax increase to provide additional money for four agencies dealing with conservation-related activities. Monies derived from the proposed 1/8th of 1 percent increase would be divided mostly between the parks and tourism and wildlife departments. If the proposal passes, voters will decide the issue — and a constitutional amendment allowing the game and fish division to receive general fund monies — in general elections this fall.

Scientists may have found the biological control agent they've been looking for in the battle to control purple loosestrife, a nuisance plant that has degraded wetlands and waterways by choking out beneficial vegetation. *Sports Afield* says three European beetle species that feed exclusively on the plant have been released in a confined test. If it works, the insects could reduce loosestrife to a minor component of wetlands.

Ten western cougars have been released into northeastern Florida wilderness to determine whether the endangered Florida panther can survive in the region. The western cats were introduced into northern Baker County, next to Osceola National Forest and Okefenokee Swamp. Biologists expect them to disperse over the 4,800-square-mile area. The test will run for three years. Fewer than 50 Florida panthers are known to exist in the Everglades and Big Cypress regions of south Florida.

Nonresident demand for Wyoming elk licenses rose 8 percent this year, following on the heels of a 20 percent decline. The decline was blamed on fee increases that raised the price of nonresident elk tags \$100. Last year only 14,711 hunters applied for 7,250 licenses, but this year nearly 16,000 nonresidents applied.

The National Shooting Sports Foundation has helped to launch a new organization dedicated to expanding shooting and hunting opportunities for women. The Women's Shooting Sports Foundation, a nonprofit group, is currently organizing sporting clays tournaments for women only, and it has similar plans for other shooting disciplines. For more information on this new group, write them at 1505 Highway 6 South, Suite 103, Houston, TX 77077.

A bill in the Minnesota legislature would add a 16 percent sales tax on all artificial furs — the same rate applied to natural ones. According to the Trapper and Predator Caller, the proposal would dedicate all monies to fund a beaver damage control program.

Answers: 1. — H; 2. — E; 3. — M; 4. — L; 5. — O; 6. — C; 7. — K. The hemlock is the Pennsylvania state tree.

Working Together for Wildlife



- ◆ “Bear Run” by Bob Sopchick is the 11th limited edition fine art print for the Working Together for Wildlife program.

As with previous editions, “Bear Run” is limited to 600 signed and numbered prints on acid-free, 100 percent rag paper. Image size is about 15x22½ inches. The prints are \$125, delivered; framed prints cost \$97.50 more.

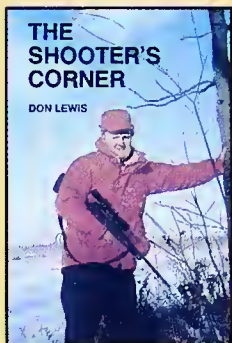
- ◆ Proceeds from WTFW sales benefit Pennsylvania’s nongame management and research projects. So far, the program has raised more than \$1 million and has helped bring eagles, ospreys, otters and other species back to our landscape.
 - ◆ Limited numbers of past prints are still available: kestrel ('86), elk ('87), egret ('88), white-tailed deer ('89), bald eagle ('90), and ruffed grouse ('92).
- ◆ Don't forget to order a 1993 WTFW patch for only \$3. Last year's ruffed grouse patch sold out, so don't wait too long. Some patches from past years are still available, though. Ask for a complete list of sale items when placing your order.



- ◆ Order from the Pennsylvania Game Commission,
Dept. M5, 2001 Elmerton Ave., Harrisburg, PA 17110-9797.

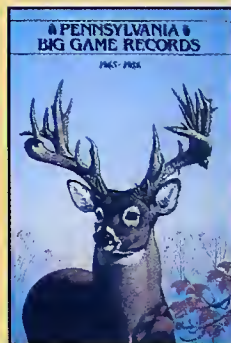


Books

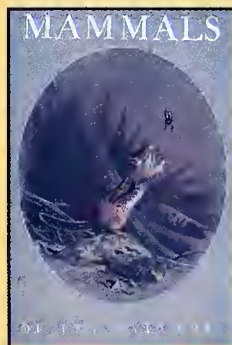
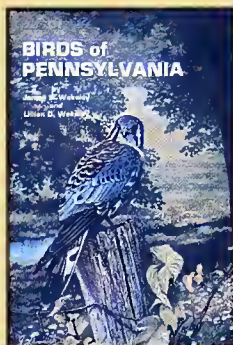


The Shooter's Corner by Don Lewis is a 449-page hardcover detailing nearly every facet of the shooting sports.
Price: \$15

Pennsylvania Big Game Records, 1965-1986, lists the state's official trophy deer and bear records, along with many stories of exciting hunts.
Price: \$10



Birds of Pennsylvania, a 214-page hardcover by James and Lillian Wakeley, highlights birds most commonly found here, plus information on their biology and behavior.
Price: \$10



Mammals of Pennsylvania by J. Kenneth Douthett et al profiles the state's mammals — from voles and shrews to bear and deer — along with their roles in state history
Price: \$4



Gone for the Day is a compilation of Game News columns written and illustrated by famed wildlife artist and naturalist, the late Ned Smith.
Price: \$4

Pennsylvania Game Cookbook is a collection of nearly 200 recipes for cooking popular, and not so popular, game animals.
Price: \$4



All prices include tax, handling and postage. Make check or money order (no cash, please) payable to Pennsylvania Game Commission, Dept. MS, 2001 Elmerton Ave., Harrisburg, PA 17110-9797. Be sure to ask for a complete list of the agency's paid and free publications.

PENNSYLVANIA GAME NEWS

JULY 1993

ONE DOLLAR



—DOUG RIFE

Bird & Mammal Charts

The Game Commission's ever popular bird and mammal charts are perfect for homes, classrooms, camps — just about anywhere. Created by internationally renown wildlife artist Ned Smith, these charts feature the state's most common mammal and bird species — 179 in all.



mammals of the mountain
(from Set No. 2)

Charts are grouped into sets; Sets No. 1 and No. 2 each contain four 20"x30" charts and are particularly useful for classrooms.

Set No. 1 features winter birds, marsh and water birds, waterfowl, and birds of prey. **PRICE: \$6**

Set No. 2 depicts mammals of farm and woodlot, mammals of the mountain, birds of the forest, and birds of field and garden. **PRICE: \$6**

Set No. 3 includes all eight charts, each 11"x14" in size. **PRICE: \$5**

The charts are sold only in sets, not individually. Prices include sales tax and delivery.



birds of prey
(from Set No. 1)

Send check or money order (no cash, please) payable to Pennsylvania Game Commission, Dept. MS, 2001 Elmerton Ave., Harrisburg, PA 17110-9797. Be sure to ask for a complete list of the agency's sale items and free publications.

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PENNSYLVANIA GAME NEWS (ISSN 0031-451X) is published monthly for \$9 per year, \$25.50 for three years, or membership in Pennsylvania's Cooperative Farm-Game Project or Safety Zone Project; to Canada and all other foreign countries, \$10 U.S. currency, per year. Published by the Pennsylvania Game Commission, Harrisburg, PA. Phone (717) 787-4250. Second-class postage paid at Harrisburg, Pa. CHANGE OF ADDRESS: POSTMASTER: Send both old and new addresses to Pennsylvania Game News, 2001 Elinerton Ave., Harrisburg, PA 17110-9797. Allow six weeks for processing. Material accepted is subject to our requirements for editing and revising. Author payment covers all rights and title to accepted material, including manuscripts, photographs, drawings and illustrations. No information contained in this magazine may be used for advertising or commercial purposes. Opinions expressed here do not necessarily reflect those of the Pennsylvania Game Commission. Copyright © 1993 by the Pennsylvania Game Commission, an Equal Opportunity Employer, the programs of which are all administered consistent with the goals and objectives of Affirmative Action. All rights reserved.

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Editorial

1.5 Million HTE Students

LAST APRIL the Game Commission's Hunter-Trapper Education program went over the 1.5 million student mark. Since the program began, and largely due to the thousands of volunteer instructors who have taught courses over the years, hunting has become one of the safest outdoor activities.

Hunter education began in the 1950s through the NRA. Known as hunter safety back then, emphasis was on safe gun handling and hunting practices. Courses, where available, were offered as a public service. In 1959 the Game Commission officially adopted hunter safety. Every district game protector was trained and became a certified instructor. In turn, they each recruited volunteer instructors to conduct courses in their districts. This is the same basic framework used today.

In 1969 it became mandatory that all first-time hunters under the age of 16 complete a hunter safety course before being allowed to purchase a license. Minimum course length was set at four hours. A few years later, sportsmanship and ethics were added to the curriculum and the minimum course time was increased to six hours. Reflecting those additions, the program name was changed to Hunter Education.

Hunter-ed requirements became more encompassing in 1982 when all first-time hunters — regardless of age — were required to take the course. Then, in 1986, trapping and furtaking became prescribed subjects. Minimum class length was increased to 10 hours and the course became known as the Hunter-Trapper Education.

As this program has evolved over the years, hunting has progressively become more safe. From 1915 through 1968, accident rates per 100,000 hunters averaged 50.05. From 1969 — when the course became mandatory for first-time hunters under 16 years of age — through 1981, the rate dropped nearly in half, to 24.75. Since 1982, when all first-time hunters were required to take the course, the hunting accident rate was virtually halved again, dropping to 11.15.

There's more to HTE than presenting courses for new hunters and trappers. For many years now, every hunting accident has been thoroughly investigated, and from these investigations, primary causes of accidents have been identified. This information is used to promote safe hunting practices and, when necessary, enact regulations. Fluorescent orange to eliminate "shot in mistake for game" and "victim in line of fire" accidents is a prime example.

In recognizing this 1.5 million milestone, the role of our HTE instructors cannot be overemphasized. Coming from all walks of life, these volunteers represent the foundation of the program. Early on, instructors were in many respects left on their own, but today's teachers receive training at the district and region levels, and just several years ago an advanced, week-long course for instructors was implemented at the Ross Leffler School of Conservation.

HTE today is more advanced than ever. In general, students are receiving more actual shooting instruction and other hands-on training. In some areas, volunteer coordinators help administer programs on a district or county basis, and in Centre County, a county-wide course is offered, providing comprehensive coverage of many subjects.

Hunter-Trapper Education has come a long way. What began as a modest safety class has evolved into a comprehensive program taught by trained and dedicated instructors, and through this effort, today's hunters are more knowledgeable and better prepared to become not just safe hunters and trappers, but upstanding sportsmen. — *Bob Mitchell*

Letters

Editor:

Just letting you know that sportsmen other than Pennsylvania residents enjoy your publications. Unfortunately, I have never had the opportunity to hunt or fish in Pennsylvania, except by reading the stories in *Game News*. Keep up the good work.

R.J. DANOSKI,
BINGHAMTON, NY

Editor:

I recently became aware of the Game Commission's attempts to stop the feeding of elk near Benezette. This should not be right. The people of Jackson Hole, WY, feed elk every winter. Pennsylvania residents should not be any different. The next thing you know, people will have to stop feeding birds.

C. MCGARRY,
CURWENSVILLE

This particular issue is not a question of feeding wild animals. In the instance you refer to, elk — particularly a high percentage of the adult bulls — were being concentrated in excessively high numbers. The animals were becoming domesticated to the extent that they were losing their natural fear of humans. It was an unhealthy situation for the animals, a traffic hazard, and potentially dangerous for onlookers. By all accounts, however, the practice has stopped.

Editor:

I have been feeding hummingbirds for five years, and after reading your article about hummingbirds in the May issue, I took your advice

and stopped putting red food coloring in my hummingbird food.

For over a week I watched the hummingbirds come to my feeder but never feed. Within an hour, however, after I put red food coloring back in the feeder, the hummingbirds were back feeding. I guess my birds are spoiled.

K. SHAFER,
WATERFORD

Editor:

Last winter we purchased "On the Trail of Pennsylvania's Black Bears" and have enjoyed watching it several times.

We've also loaned it to a couple of friends who've had experiences with bears. We live near the border and appreciate all the work your agency is doing.

M. AND L. LANTERMAN,
LOWMAN, NY

Editor:

As librarian for the Slippery Rock Middle School, I wish to take the opportunity to thank you for the complimentary *Game News* subscription you provide our library. Your magazine is one of our most widely read periodicals.

M.S. TOMEO,
SLIPPERY ROCK

Editor:

I really enjoy Marcia Bonta's "The Naturalist's Eye." It's a special pleasure for me to read about her

experiences on the old farm in Brush Hollow. As I was growing up in Tyrone in the 1950s, I roamed all over Brush Mountain, and I still vividly recall the area she writes about so well.

I remember many exciting fox chases, deer hunts and even a few successful turkey hunts back then.

I also remember the first fox den I ever found. It was in what she calls the "First Field." We referred to it as the "last little Plum field."

Here in West Virginia, I still hunt raccoons and bear with hounds, and one of my Plott hounds is named Brush Mountain Buckwheat, after the mountain I grew up on many years ago.

In closing, I enjoy your wonderful magazine, especially Marcia's column. It sure brings back many fond memories to this old country boy.

J. SUMMERS,
FORT ASHBY, WV

Editor:

For the past few years, my good friends have made the *Game News* a Christmas gift, and I thoroughly enjoy it. I especially like the artwork you feature on your covers and inside.

I like these more than photographs because artwork reflects the artist's spirit, and there's always more in the drawing than is apparent at first glance.

D. HIGHLANDS,
PITTSBURGH

**Your comments are welcome. Mail them to "Letters,"
2001 Elmerton Ave., Harrisburg, PA 17110-9797.
Letters will be edited for brevity and clarity.**

Readin' Sign

Learning to decipher tracks, trails, droppings and other telltale markings can get archers closer to the whitetail. And understanding the animal's habits can spell success.

By Mike Raykovicz

THE FIRST DAY of the 1992 archery season found me in a familiar meadow in Susquehanna County. The place was special because it had all the essential elements for a good hunt.

From where I had placed my stand, a field of corn grew a quarter-mile to the west. Thick pines were located about 200 yards to the east. In addition, newly planted clover fields were also nearby. Between the farm crops, a grove of old apple trees offered passing deer a treat few could pass up.

This year, however, because of a late spring frost, I expected to find few apples, and my early scouting indicated my hunch was correct. For the most part, I found the trees barren. Only two had any apples, yet from all appearances the deer were visiting these trees with predictable regularity.

The tree I selected for my stand was a large maple growing at the edge of a small brook. Ordinarily, I don't like setting up in a hardwood tree because once the leaves fall, hunter movement is easily detected. But this tree provided an excellent location for a shot at deer feeding near one of the apple trees and, for the time being, the foliage would provide plenty of cover.

In the weeks prior to the season, I visited the site on a regular basis. I examined the tracks along the muddy creek bank and studied the droppings left under the apple tree. Some of the smaller tracks were laid over the larger tracks, apparently made by a doe and her fawns.

It should be pointed out, however, that tracks by themselves do not necessarily indicate they were made by either a buck or doe. In fact, large tracks can be made by an animal of either sex.

From what I could see, the scenario seemed simple. The doe and her fawns were feeding in the area, and as they browsed the smaller deer walked behind their mother.

Closer examination, however, indicated another, even larger track coming from a different direction. Does travel with other deer, usually their fawns, while bucks often travel alone. Additionally, when I examined the other apple trees, I could not find a track of equal size. I was optimistic the tracks may have been those of a buck. I would soon find out.



After studying the hoof prints I continued my investigation of the area by examining the droppings left on the ground. Deer browsing on acorns, beechnuts and tree buds produce hard round, pellets such as those hunters find in late fall and early winter. These droppings were soft and runny and looked like miniature cow pies. The soft stool indicated the deer were grazing on soft foods such as alfalfa, clover and other grasses, not on hard mast such as beechnuts and acorns.

By interpreting these deer signs, I concluded they were feeding on the farm crops in the early morning hours and then leisurely making their way through the meadow. It was clear they stopped for a snack of apples on their way to the security offered by the thick pines. Things seemed almost too easy.

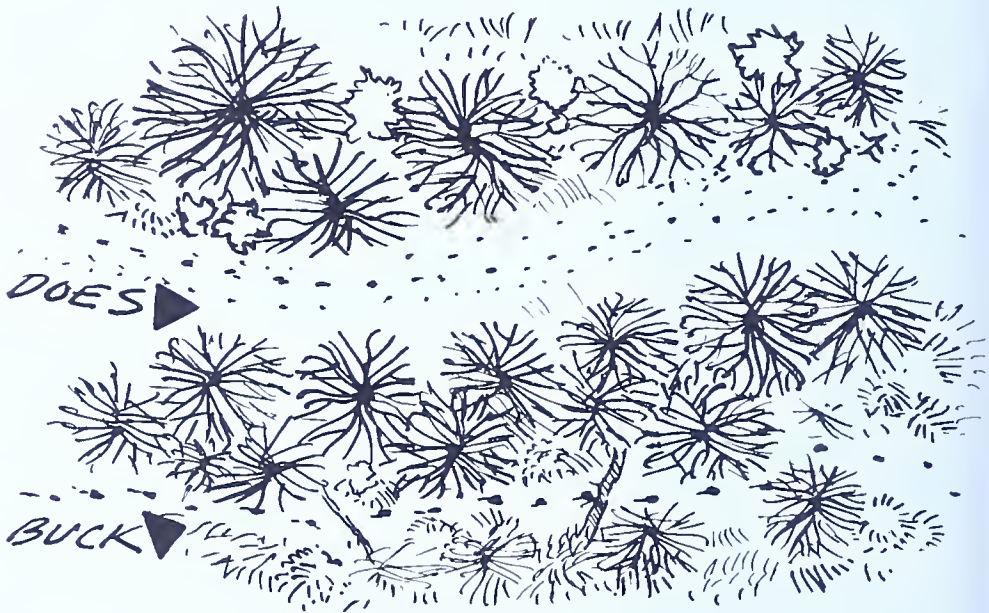
Opening day arrived and found me in my stand about a half-hour before daylight. I hung up my bow, leaned back in my seat and settled in for the wait. The woods were very quiet, and I felt this was a good sign. It

seemed I hadn't disturbed anything on my way to the stand — least of all deer.

About 7:15 I noticed a movement in the trees in front of me. The compact binoculars I carry confirmed it was a deer. As I studied the animal, I got a shot of adrenaline as I made out a good set of antlers. Instead of the usual and expected parade of does, I got lucky and had a nice 8-point choose to visit this spot in his morning rounds.

The buck fed casually around the area but did not present a shot. In fact, on several occasions he walked away and left me thinking he was gone for good. But he kept coming back to feed on the tender grass and windfall apples around me. As I anticipated, he was on his way from the fields and headed toward the pines beyond my stand. At one point the buck was only five or six yards away, but thick brush on either side of my stand prevented me from taking the shot.

The buck stood at the creek bank and, luckily for me, chose not to cross. Instead,



What many hunters fail to realize is that buck and doe don't necessarily use the same trails. Doe trails often appear well-used while a parallel buck trail is usually less distinct and utilizes more cover.

he turned and walked under the apple tree my stand was in. I drew back and let an arrow fly. The shaft flew true, passing through the rib cage and out the opposite shoulder. The deer whirled and bounded into the brush beyond the apple tree.

Seconds later I heard the distinct crack of a breaking limb. He was down. After a short wait, a good blood trail led me to the fallen buck. It was the first hour of the season and already I was tying my tag to one of the nicest whitetails I ever took from Penn's Woods.

To a deer hunter, especially a bowhunter, nothing is as important as reading deer sign. Many hunters do their early season scouting and see sign, but they don't pay enough attention to the story it can tell. They do not take the time to interpret what they see and are, therefore, at a distinct disadvantage once the season opens.

Droppings, rubs and tracks are all indicators of the number and size of the animals inhabiting a particular piece of real estate. A smart hunter will take the time to study what the sign is telling him.

In early October, the most important indicators are droppings and tracks. The rut is still a few weeks away and so activity such as rubbing and scraping are at a minimum. Concentrating on the quantity of deer sign in a given area will indicate the number of deer using the area and whether the property is worth hunting.

I look for sign in obvious crossings and trails. I examine the available food supply and try to determine where the deer want to be and why. Creek bottoms, fencerows or natural funnel areas always get my attention.

When I scout a potential area and read deer sign, the first thing I look for are deer tracks. Tracks can tell an observant hunter a great deal about the composition of the

deer population and to what extent it is utilizing the available food sources.

When looking at tracks I try to determine if any large tracks are accompanied by smaller tracks, or if the large tracks seem to be those of a lone deer. The only thing a hunter can tell for sure about a large track is that it was made by an adult deer. I doubt anyone can differentiate the sex of a deer by its track.

If the track is much larger than the others and is not accompanied by smaller tracks, I am optimistic and assume it was made by a buck. It's not a foolproof philosophy, but it's not a bad one either.

When examining a deer trail I try to determine the configuration of the tracks on the ground. If the trail shows many large and medium size prints mixed with smaller ones, it's likely the trail is used by several does and their fawns. A fawn will

generally trail after its mother, so small tracks that accompany a larger track can be a dead giveaway.

Sometimes the larger tracks will be placed over the smaller tracks indicating the fawns were feeding away from their mother and thus being followed by the mother. Be especially careful when looking at multiple sets of tracks to determine if there are any fawns in the group.

Bucks frequently ignore these "doe trails" and stick to parallel, less distinct trails. If I find a well-used trail and it shows evidence of being used by doe I always search for a less obvious parallel trail.

When evaluating deer trails, it is important to find out where these trails lead. If I follow the trail and it leads to food of some sort, I hunt this spot in the evening because deer will be moving to the food. If the trail leads to thick cover, then it is a good morning location since the deer will be traveling the route to their bedding areas.

The only thing a hunter can tell for sure about a large track is that it was made by an adult deer. I doubt anyone can tell a deer's sex by its track.

Study the tracks left by the deer to determine their direction of travel.

Other factors besides deer tracks have to be considered before deciding whether to hunt the area. Three or four deer feeding in a soft field can create a large number of tracks.

A hunter should consider the number of small tracks that may cross over or are inside of the larger tracks. Once again, track configuration of this type is generally made by a doe and her fawns. A large track well apart from the other tracks may mean a buck lives in the area.

When examining deer sign, I watch the fringe areas for trees that may have been rubbed by a buck. The earliest rubbing activity may occur around the second week of October, sometimes earlier. These early rubs are considered signposts and do not have the significance of the rubs found later in the season when rutting activity begins in earnest.

By late September, most bucks will have shed the velvet from their antlers, and by early October they begin to exhibit more aggressive behavior by rubbing their hardened antlers on small trees or saplings.

These early season rubs are generally only gouges left in the bark of the rubbing tree. The bark is usually not peeled off as it is later in the season. Typically there are only slight scratches in the bark, but they are enough to tell me a buck lives nearby.

Later in the season, about the third week, rubs become obvious and can be excellent clues to understanding the behavior and movement of bucks.

By observing rubs a hunter can establish travel patterns of deer and then make a more appropriate placement of his stand. If the hunter does not take the time to interpret the kind of rub he finds, he may be wasting his time hunting an unproductive location.

If I find a single rub I usually don't get too excited. A single rub may be a spontaneous action made by a buck passing through an area.

On the other hand, a series of rubs can indicate excellent places to begin hunting. If a rub is made in a thick, brushy location with a scrape nearby, and if there is an

overhanging evergreen limb overhead, I look at this as a sign from heaven.

A good place to look for rubs is where two trails intersect or where woods meld into overgrown fields. Rubs found in these areas are made as territorial signposts and can help a hunter determine if the site is worth hunting.

If the rubs follow a definite trail, they can be of great help in determining the direction of deer movement and they can give a clue as to the size of the buck making them. It is generally believed by most experienced bowhunters that big bucks rub big trees.

The rubs and scrapes made in conjunction with rutting activity are usually found in areas of dense cover and often along old trails or logging roads. If I encounter a series of tree rubs or a primary scrape late in the season, I will hunt the spot for a few days at least.

Now that Pennsylvania hunters can hunt in early November, more of us will be encountering such sign. It is important to understand what constitutes a good scrape and one that is of little value.

A section of bare earth in an open area means a buck has simply pawed at the ground and moved on. Biologists regard these areas as secondary scrapes, and it's not likely a buck will return to this spot on purpose.

Bucks make primary scrapes in secluded spots to attract a doe in estrus. They paw at the earth, urinate in the bare spot, and rub their foreheads on an overhanging branch.

Scrapes made in open areas may not be productive. Those found in thick cover could be primary breeding scrapes and therefore worth checking.

A primary scrape is usually made under an evergreen tree and shows the footprint of the buck that made it. Many times a good buck will rub his antlers in the newly pawed earth leaving tine marks visible to anyone who looks at the scrape carefully.

Scrapes made in open areas are usually not productive. If a scrape is made in thick cover it has the potential of being a primary breeding scrape and is worth the hunter's attention.

When hunting over scrapes a hunter should be very careful about leaving unwanted scent at the scrape site. When I was a kid I trapped fox for the bounty paid on them in those days. To avoid contaminating my traps with human odor, I left them in the woods, hanging from the boughs of an evergreen tree. I always checked my traps from a distance and never approached the sets unless I was wearing rubber boots.

Foxes and bucks have a lot in common when it comes to perceiving danger by

scent. When hunting over scrapes it pays to be extremely scent sensitive.

Remember, a buck is attempting to attract a doe to the scrape site and will check the scrape frequently. If the buck detects human scent near the scrape, he is likely to abandon the area.

When hunting near a scrape, I position my stand some distance from it. A big buck, like the foxes I trapped, will check the set from a distance. Smaller, less wise bucks may walk right up to a scrape and present the hunter with an easy shot. These are the bucks that often end up in the freezer.

Deer tracks and rubs are not the only early season signs I consider when evaluating a hunting area. Deer droppings are the next thing I look for. By examining the quantity and composition of deer droppings, I may be able to determine whether the animals have been feeding on soft, non-bulk producing foods such as apples and grasses or on more bulk-producing foods such as beechnuts and acorns.

Whitetails definitely prefer certain foods at certain times of the year. Research has shown deer prefer white oak acorns over almost any other available food. They may ignore apples for days or weeks at a time if there is a good white acorn crop nearby. A hunter who pays attention to what deer are eating will often see deer while others spend their time hunting less productive areas.

By examining droppings, a hunter can get an edge in stand placement because droppings can give a clue to the current food preferences of the deer. For example,

Soft, amorphous droppings indicate deer have been feeding on apples, grasses and the like. Hard, round droppings mean deer are feeding on bulk-producing foods such as beechnuts and acorns.



two years ago, despite an abundant apple crop, the windfall fruits were ignored by the deer and remained on the ground for several weeks.

It wasn't until the last week of bow season that the deer showed much interest in the apples. Once they did, however, they made short work of the fallen fruit. I'll wager a hunter watching an apple tree for the first several weeks of the season did not see many deer.

A hunter who carefully reads sign will also pay attention to weather patterns. Late in the bow season, periods of cold, stormy weather result in increased deer activity. These are excellent times to be on watch.

A falling barometer is a good indicator of increased deer movement because it indicates a change in the prevailing weather pattern. I love hunting whitetails in a light rain. It's cold and miserable to be sure, but I almost always see deer under these circumstances.

Reading sign means more than just looking at it. If a hunter is to be successful on a

consistent basis, he must be able to put all the information he sees to good use. He must approach his hunting from an intellectual perspective.

Being able to read deer sign means the hunter must have a knowledge of the game he is hunting and of his hunting territory. Stand placement and hunting methods will be dictated by what the hunter can read from the available deer sign.

Ultimate Confidence

When I plan my hunting strategy, I have the ultimate confidence in any of my stand locations. If I am not seeing deer from one stand, I move to another. Ultimately I am going to see the buck I am after and with some luck I will have my shot.

Bowhunting whitetails is one of the finest challenges imaginable, and understanding deer behavior and deer movements will allow for success. Successful deer hunters work at their sport and get better at it every year, and nothing short of being in the timber and reading deer sign can teach an archer what he needs to know.

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Summer Biathlon

An adaptation of a winter Olympic sport is becoming increasingly popular in the U.S. The big news is that its national championship is coming to Centre County this fall.

By George F. Mock
WCO, Centre County



J.S. Rupp

IN SUMMER BIATHLON, competitors substitute running for cross-country skiing. Getting off an accurate shot when you're breathing heavily and your heart is pounding is no easy task, but ask anyone who's ever run a summer biathlon — it's a heck of a lot of fun.

IT'S OPENING DAY, and you're pretty sure the buck you've been scouting will head for ridge top cover when the shooting begins. You're getting a late start, though, so you have to hurry.

The long, steep climb is starting to make you pant and sweat. You know you should slow down, but you know you have to get up there before the buck does.

The climb is steepest just before the top, but you push on — your heart pounding and your breath coming in great gulps. Rather than stop now, you decide you can catch your breath once in position.

You crest the ridge, praying you're in time. Your eyes intently search the surrounding area. Then you see it, a flicker of movement about 50 yards to your right. The cover isn't too thick, and you quickly make out the form of the buck you've been after — and he's looking directly at you.

The deer will soon slip into the laurel, so there are only seconds to mount the rifle smoothly, lock on to the target and squeeze off a good shot. But the exertion of the climb makes a steady hold nearly impossible. You try to control your breathing and calm yourself as best you can. Finally, the crosshairs settle on the deer's shoulder. You squeeze the trigger; the deer goes right down.

That is the essence of biathlon: firing an accurate shot immediately following a period of intense physical exertion.

Biathlon has its roots in the Scandinavian countries. Rock carvings found there dating back 4,000 years depict men on skis stalking animals. In the 1700s biathlon evolved from a means of survival to military applications. Companies of soldiers on skis were mobile and could quickly react to threats. In the late 1930s Finnish ski troops, outnumbered 10 to one, routed the Russians from their border.

Biathlon as we know it today is an Olympic sport that combines cross-country skiing with rifle shooting. Competitors race over a prescribed course with several stops at a rifle range where — much like our deer hunter cresting the mountain — they must steady themselves and shoot accurately at small metal knock-down targets. For each target missed, racers are required to ski around a penalty track. Although it's largely ignored in U.S. media coverage, biathlon boasts more participating countries than any other winter Olympic sport.

To be competitive at the world and Olympic levels, an athlete must practice and train all year long. He or she must

either travel to areas that have snow or use alternate training methods to substitute for skiing. The most common substitute is running, and from that off-season training came the sport of summer biathlon — a combination of running and rifle shooting.

Four-time Olympic biathlete Lyle Nelson saw the interest non-biathletes had in this running and shooting "game." In 1986 he, along with several of his friends, organized the first summer biathlon competition. From that humble beginning has grown a sport that includes local, regional and national series races, and a national championship with thousands of dollars in prize money at stake.

After just six years in the United States, summer biathlon can boast more participants than the winter version, which has been an Olympic sport since 1924.

Should the Game Commission be involved in promoting this kind of event? You bet. On average, 60 percent of the people who participate in summer biathlon consider themselves to be runners. Shooters make up 20 percent of the entrants at a typical race, and non-shooters, people who



J. S. Rupp

THE ALLURE of running and shooting draws all kinds of people to summer biathlon races. Most are runners with little or no shooting experience, some are shooters fairly new at running. The Commission's sponsorship of this program is another example of its intent to introduce non-traditional audiences to the outdoor sports.

have never fired a gun before, constitute the remaining 20 percent.

Summer biathlon is giving thousands of people who have no prior experience with firearms an opportunity to learn that shooting is a fun, safe and challenging sport. Surveys from past summer biathlons at the Commission's Scotia Range indicate that people who had no firearms experience before the event — and some who in fact said they didn't like guns — gained an appreciation for firearms and shooting. With the anti-gun climate that exists today, we need to educate all the people we can.

A typical summer biathlon consists of a 5K (five kilometers or 3.1 miles) run coupled with 10 shots fired from a .22 rimfire rifle. Five shots are fired from each of two positions, offhand (standing) and prone (lying down).

The targets, 3 1/2-inch metal disks that topple when hit, are placed 25 meters from the firing line.

Racers are started at intervals so the firing line does not become congested. At the start command, the competitors run a 1-mile loop that ends at the rifle range, where they are directed to a firing point. At the first range stop, the competitor fires at the five targets from the prone position.

Each firing position is manned by a range officer who scores the hits, coaches the shooter and makes sure that safety on the line is maintained.

After shooting the five prone targets, participants then run the 1-mile loop a second time, again ending at the range. This time the five shots are fired from the standing position. Then, with the shooting completed, the racer has only to run a final 1-mile loop to the finish line.

Scores are determined by deducting 30 seconds for every target hit from the standing position and 15 seconds for each hit from the prone position from the total time it takes to complete the course. World class scores run right around 16 minutes.

This year, thanks to event sponsors Gregg Electronics/Motorola, Holiday Inn Penn State, the Game Commission and the Pennsylvania Rifle and Pistol Associa-

tion, Scotia Range will be the site of two summer biathlon competitions.

The first event will be a National Series race that will be held Sept. 19. The second event will be the Kingsbury Summer Biathlon National Championships on Oct. 9.

Both of these events are open to the public. First-timers are welcome, even at the nationals. The only requirement is that potential entrants must have completed a summer biathlon safety clinic prior to entering the race. These clinics take about an hour and cover safety and race technique and include hands-on, live-fire training with the rifles.

All you need to bring — for both the clinics and the races — is your running gear. Everything else, including guns and ammo, is provided by the summer biathlon program. Clinics are usually scheduled both the night before and morning of the competition.

Competition is broken into male and female categories and is separated into age groups as well. If past races held here are any indication, participants will represent people of all ages and skill levels — everyone from young and old first-timers to Olympic and National Team athletes.

The Central Pennsylvania Hunter Education Association is organizing these events. Association members are proud that their group, the State College area and Scotia Range were chosen to host this year's Kingsbury national championships. State College was chosen over the cities of Dayton, Indianapolis and Baton Rouge to host the event. Last year's championships were held at Sun Valley, ID.

Holiday Inn Penn State will be the host hotel for both events. The hotel will also be the site of a marksmanship clinic and an air rifle competition the evening before the national championship race, and an awards banquet afterwards to honor the winners.

For additional information on summer biathlon, clinic dates, starting times and directions to Scotia Range, please call the Commission's Northcentral Region at (800) 422-7551.

*A tape recorder and some good memories
are all it takes to record . . .*

The Golden Days of Hunting

By Dr. Jim O'Boyle

ONE GLUM MONDAY morning, sitting in the parking lot we Connecticut commuters call Interstate 91, I saw next to the miles of motionless cars ahead of me an incongruous sight: a beagle. Brightening my otherwise gray morning, it had evidently broken away from a housing development and was propelling itself through a briar patch along the highway.

Before long, a cottontail highballed from the briars and into a backyard; the 13-inch, tail wagging, was hot on its trail. Smiling broadly, I was reminded of hunting memories when I was a kid tromping through Penn's Woodson November mornings: youth, dogs, thermoses of hot coffee, rabbits and the music of beagles.

Now beagles and bunnies are as out of place in the 'burbs as '50 Chevies. I sat there, hoping more people could transport themselves out of boring situations with such recollections, and thinking it would be a shame if they couldn't. My own kids have had their outdoor experiences, but my grandkids might never share in the great days of the hunt.

The 1940s, '50s and '60s were great times for hunting — the golden years. Dad introduced us kids to the outdoors and regaled us with his tales of hunting when it was at its peak.

He's retired now, after almost 40 years of medical practice in the Scranton area. But even at 86 he still has a knack for recalling details.

Right there, stuck in traffic and watch-

ing that beagle, I vowed that the next time I visited Dad I'd get him on audio tape for the kids. He could enthral the family for hours with stories of the woods. The next generation, I thought, should have access to this rich storehouse of lore: hunting for food in the Depression; deer camps of the '40s; small game heaven on the dairy farms of the '50s.

Let's see, he'd probably start with a story of when he was a kid on his cousin's farm in Nicholson, Sullivan County, with dungarees and bare feet, hunting chucks with a single-shot .22. He was born in 1905 and probably started hunting . . .

"It was probably 1917. I quit in 1982, so that's about 65 years in the woods. I have all my licenses since 1933. The old ones are metal. The only ones I'm missing are from the war years.

"My cousin had us kids out to put up hay and do other chores in the summer. Whenever I could, I'd sneak out after chucks with the .22 and an old collie. The gun had open sights, and not many cartridges were available. I had to develop a good eye.

"More than the chucks, though, I remember being initiated those summers into the mysteries of the woods. Just lying on a sunny ledge overlooking the Tunkhannock River, scanning the river bottom, I'd see all kinds of things.

"One spring I found some fox kits playing like puppies. They were so frisky that they rolled and tumbled right up to me before spotting danger.

"With a June breeze blowing and Old Dash lying there with his big collie smile and the school books closed for the summer, I knew I was hooked on the outdoors then and there. Those quiet times are the ones I remember most. Kids today should have that time to dream and be close to the woods.

"My dad, your great-granddad, was a great hunter. He ran a hotel in Dunmore and spent a lot of time in the woods. If I remember correctly, there weren't hunting seasons then. That seemed to come later. As

a kid at Dunmore Corners, I remember seeing a doctor and his hunting party coming back from a Pike County hunting camp. They were loaded with deer and bear and grouse, rabbits, even a pheasant.

"Hunting was a lot different then. It seemed like everybody kept hounds. I hunted with four or five other hunters. Chief Burke, police chief in Dunmore, and



I hunted often. We'd use his pack in the morning and another pack in the afternoon. We'd really give those bunnies a chase.

"People ate what they shot, too, sometimes out of necessity. That was pre-welfare. The chief's brother, Mart Burke, was a miner who hunted every chance he could to put a little more food on the table. Behind Mart's house were some of the leanest 15-inch hounds I ever saw. They were so lean I could count their ribs, and they could run all day.

"Another thing, the woods were a lot closer to town then: no suburban sprawl. Town ended; the woods began, just like in some parts of the West and South today. I'd get home from school at three o'clock and be in the woods by 3:30, just by changing my clothes, grabbing my gun and walking to the end of Drinker Street.

"It was common to see men walking through town with shotguns. No big deal. There were even those without cars who would take the street car to the end of the line, hunt all day, and then catch the trolley again to get home. There'd be game all over the floor of the car.

"There were more farms then. Great-grandma Casey's family had a big dairy farm in Hop Bottom. They built the buildings on weekends after walking from Scranton. They worked in the Erie Shops during the week. We had not only their farm to hunt, but also the neighbors'. In fact, for years it seemed we had a lot of Sullivan County as our private preserve.

"You don't see too many operations like that today because of the government-supported milk price program and the trend toward dairy co-ops, but in those days dairy farms were great for small game. Brushpiles, hedgerows, plenty of water and feed. Game sure was plentiful, and as long as we treated

the farmers with respect, we were always welcome. That lasted right into the '50s.

"You remember that, Jim. That's when you began hunting. In fact, that's where I downed that ringneck with your single-shot, the one that I broke you in on. It had a hammer, and for your first year I made you carry the shell in your hand. You didn't like that much, but it made you not only a safer hunter but also a better shot.

"Of course, people tend to romanticize the past, but honestly it seemed that everyone knew everyone else. If you talked to a hunter long enough, you often discovered

you were probably distantly related. I remember a day before a Thanksgiving dinner, maybe around 1920. Your grandmother was preparing food. Naturally, game was included. It was bitter cold, and it was nice to work in the steamy kitchen.

"There was a knock at the door, and when your grandmother answered it, there stood a kid about 16 who had hunted all the 10 miles from Elmhurst where

his family had a farm. It was getting dark, and he asked if he could come in to warm up before heading home. Well, your grandmother, all she needed was a cold, hungry kid to make her happy. In no time he was sitting at the table with a plate of food bigger than he was.

"His Dad had died that summer and the young man was trying to keep the family together by farming and hunting, and sure enough, as it turned out, he was related to us. That was all your grandmother needed. She insisted that he stay overnight.

"He left the next morning with sacks of food. He was going to hunt his way back. Later we found out that the family turned out all right. With kids like that in charge, we weren't worried. In fact, I've never seen a kid properly schooled in the woods who turned out bad. And we broke in a lot of kids over the years. Mix boys and dogs with

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the discipline of the woods, and you have a great combination.

"Maybe I'm getting old and grouchy. It seems I get frustrated by the hunting situation today. The last time I went out, with Bob Miller, the druggist, we just couldn't find a place to stop the car: houses, highways, No Trespassing signs. Phooey! I finally started off in a patch of woods and wound up in a guy's backyard barbecue pit. Time to quit, I thought.

"On the way home, Bob and I pulled over for lunch and got to talking about some of the deer hunts of the '40s and '50s at Mushpaw Hunting Club.

"It was north of Honesdale, on the banks of the Delaware River wild country. No roads or farms back there. It seemed like they had about 50 square miles. Just to get in, we had to drive three or four miles up a dirt road, and we could walk for four or five miles and still be on camp property.

"Being able to hunt so far from camp or a road, we were careful about where we shot deer, and we quickly learned not to shoot one near the river. Some years we enjoyed a light tracking snow, and others it was so heavy we needed chains to get out. Once we had to skid a car out.

"We had some great times there. It was after the war, and the guys who had been in the service were accustomed to camp life. Some would stay and hunt the entire two weeks. We hired an old Army cook who turned out some beautiful meals, and it was a good thing, too. You take 20 guys who have spent eight hours in the woods and you'd better have lots of chow.

"Game! I never saw such a proliferation of wild animals. There were beaver dams all over. I saw wildcats, turkey, bear and mink. Some great fishing streams were there, but nobody would go in there

"SOMETIMES when I'm alone, I conjure up a scene from the back porch at the old house. It's a cold Saturday morning in November...."

in the spring because it was loaded with rattlers. I heard of one being found near our camp that was over five feet long.

"And deer. It was routine to have 10 bucks hanging up after the first day. No doe, though. The regular antlerless seasons didn't start until the mid-'50s, I think. In those days hunters assembled in large groups and organized deer drives. They were used to working together in the service, so I guess it was only natural that they did so while hunting, too.

Lots of Noise

"Five or six fellows would post up in a line maybe a couple hundred yards apart. The rest would walk down a couple of miles. Then they'd fan out and start back toward the posters, making a lot of noise — whistling, yelling and so on. The posters stood like statues and hoped for a shot. At least that was the theory; sometimes the deer didn't understand the game plan, though.

"One of the strangest kills happened one day when we hadn't had a shot all morning. I had heard some shots from another party. At lunch we got together



and, because it was cold and snowing and because it seemed there were no deer around anyway, we built a fire. We had leaned the rifles against a fallen log and were into the lunches packed by the cook.

"We were all talking, rattling papers and so on when I happened to look up. There, not 15 yards away, were three deer just standing and looking at us. I yelled 'Deer!' and made a dive for the old Remington .35. I don't know who jumped higher, the deer or the hunters.

"While I was on my belly I got a shot off, but I was sure I had missed. But Bob said, 'Let's not be too hasty, Doc.'

"Sure enough, we walked down the path and found his trail. There he was near the stream. One shot to the neck finished him off. You imagine spending all morning as quiet as the Sphinx, and then getting a buck when he walks right into a party.

The Best Part

"I see your tape is running out, so I'll finish up. I think the best part of hunting was the men I met and the anticipation of the hunt. It's like any sport. When it's all over, you remember the men you ran laps with getting ready for the game.

"Sometimes when I'm alone, I conjure up a scene from the '50s on the back porch at the old house on Green Ridge Street in Dumore. It's a cold Saturday morning in November, about 6:30. A few snowflakes. Breath coming in steam. Everybody's had breakfast and filled a thermos for the afternoon.

"They're chewing the fat, waiting to pile in the cars for the trip to Hop Bottom. I see Mart Berke, my Merlin in the woods when I was a kid. His brother Chief, a tough-as-nails old time police chief who had a soft spot for kids.

"Affable Bob Miller, always ready with a smile and an ever-present apple or candy from his game pocket. Jim McGraw, who



"We Need Wildlife" is a message more people need to realize and appreciate if the future of our wildlife resources is to be ensured. To help promote that theme, the Game Commission has produced a new patch featuring a cardinal resting on a dogwood sprig. The 3-inch full color patch costs \$3 each, delivered, and may be ordered from the Pennsylvania Game Commission, Dept. MS, 2001 Elmerton Ave., Harrisburg, PA 17110-9797.

brought up his own boy and lots of others in the woods.

"Dr. Harold O'Dea — the only time he ever really relaxed from surgery was in the woods. You could hear his laugh a mile away. Mart, Tom and Bob Brennan, who still talk about their days with Uncle Doc in the woods. Jack Burke, a boon companion for everyone. Tom McDonnell, positively the best chef at a deer camp. Others whose faces and names have faded.

"We're kind of all standing there waiting, excited as kids. Kind of like a big family of brothers. Waiting for the woods. Building up those memories which get us through. I'm one of the last, and it's fitting that I salute them once more.

"I hope your kids have as much fun and as great memories as we did. Happy hunting."

Albino deer, a vanishing act and fingers of blame pointed at a famous Lymansville hunter make up . . .

The Century-Old Legacy of **E.N. Woodcock**

By Gregg Rinkus

AN ARCTIC COLD held Pennsylvania's northern tier in an icy grip. Incessant northwest winds blew snow in sheets. The wind chill factor hovered at minus 50 degrees. Radio broadcasts advised people against venturing out, but we were much too far along to turn back now.

Two months after Pennsylvania's regular deer season, my fiancée and I were braving the blizzard on yet another deer hunt. During our drive from St. Marys to Coudersport, the drifted roads were all but devoid of cars. Aloud, I likened our trip to an adventure and us to Northwest Territory explorers. In reply, Patty openly questioned her acceptance of my September proposal.

The deer that we sought was a white one, known by some as a "ghost deer" — a mutation surrounded by superstition. For, it is told, the hunter who shoots a white deer is doomed to have bad luck. Not one to dismiss country folklore, I hoped that any bad luck had dissipated over time: The white deer we were after was over 100 years old. . . .

In the spring of 1877, a doe with a white fawn were seen almost daily on a hill just south of Lymansville in Potter County.

The pair often mingled with the cattle in the pastures, and the fawn would frolic and play about like a lamb. This was an unusual sight, and it was generally understood that the white fawn and its mother must not be killed.

With the coming of winter and the time for hunting, the two deer were seen no more. Speculation was that they had filled the larder of a local hunter. But this was not the case. In early summer, the white yearling appeared, accompanied by a normal, spotted fawn. They were seen all summer, up until late October, when they, too, disappeared until the following spring.

In the spring of 1879, all three reappeared, but in June the trio came up missing. It was generally thought that they had changed their haunts or had been killed — the latter being strongly suspected.

About the time the white deer mysteriously vanished, E.N. Woodcock, a famous hunter and trapper who lived near Lymansville, was seen bringing fresh venison to a friend in Coudersport. One thing led to another and Woodcock was publicly accused of being responsible for the disappearance of the albinos.

Enraged by the accusations, Woodcock

vowed to prove his innocence by hunting until he found the white deer, shot one and put it on display in Coudersport — where the cry for its protection had been the loudest. He waited until fall and then hunted for days without success. The culmination of his quest, early in December 1879, is told in Woodcock's own words:

I concluded to give the white deer a rest for a few days until I returned from camp in the big woods. I was in camp only a few days when the snow went off, so I came home.

I had only been home a day or two when a man by the name of Hill came to my house in great haste. He had been cutting logs on a hill, and looking across onto a hill opposite where he was working, saw the white deer, so came to tell me what he had seen.

I at once took my gun and started after the deer. I went up the hill in the direc-

tion that Mr. Hill had seen the deer until I was quite sure that I was well above the deer, then cautiously worked my way down the side of that hill. There being no snow on the ground and the deer being white, I soon discovered it lying in its bed. I cautiously crept up within shooting distance and fired, killing the deer instantly.”*

The white buck proved to be a 7-point, and one foreleg had been badly injured. Next to the shattered knee joint, just under the skin, Woodcock discovered a bullet. Later, he learned that a local resident named Frank Williams had shot and wounded the deer in June, which explained its sudden disappearance. Apparently, it had hidden in the deep woods during its recovery.

The entire deer was mounted by a local taxidermist and sold to Prudence Lyman Boyington for \$100. After her death, it went to her daughter, Dora Boyington, and



THE FULL MOUNT of the famous white deer found its way to the Potter County Historical Society after being passed down from generation to generation.

then to Rosella (Topsy) Lyman Tauscher who passed it on to Annis Coleman.

After her death, the white buck was claimed by her daughter, Leo Coleman, who, on May 15, 1964, presented it to the Potter County Historical Society.

A few brier-entangled cut stone foundations are all that remain of the tiny hamlet of Lymansville. Maps, yellow from age, also speak of that frontier town's existence. The once booming lumber town of Coudersport, of course, still endures.

As for E.N. Woodcock, he died in 1917. In his later years, he "pushed the quill" for *Hunter-Trapper* magazine, the forerunner of today's *Fur-Fish-Game*. His experiences and observations were published in that outdoor tabloid from 1903 to 1913.

My discovery of E.N. Woodcock and his white deer was, to say the least, a roundabout affair. It was during a fall moose hunt in Quebec that I listened inquisitively when a friend from Maine time and again quoted that woodsman writer. Later, my research for a story about the legendary hunter and trapper led me to the tale of the white deer. And, best of all, I was astounded to learn that the deer still existed.

Some months afterwards, Bob Currin, present curator of Potter County's Historical Society in Coudersport, braved the numbing cold and graciously opened the doors to that history filled mansion.

While there, genealogy research into the Woodcock family was high on my list. But the primary reason for our trip was not

to trace family lineage. Our true goal was to see the famous white deer. We were not disappointed.

In a dusty but otherwise well-kept attic, amidst an array of mothballed memorabilia, was what we had come to see. After more than 100 years, the full mount of E.N. Woodcock's white buck remains remarkably well-preserved. It's quite a large deer, and although it's not a pure albino it is predominantly white. Its mounted stance depicts a deer on alert, left leg poised to stomp the ground in cautious anticipation.

Having had finally found the famous white deer, I waxed philosophical. I imagined the curiosity it must have aroused in its day. In that earlier time, white deer were far rarer than they are today.

Woodcock's specimen played a dominant role in the history of Potter County's village of Roulette. For many years, Mrs. Boyington kept the deer in the Roulette House, where it became famous and where thousands of people marveled at what they considered a freak of nature. Time and again, the deer was put on display and was also featured in parades in several nearby towns.

I felt good that the white deer had been saved. It now gazes out at the hills of Potter County where it romped so long ago. The progeny of that deer and the people who marveled at it still course through the big woods country. E.N. Woodcock's white deer is more than simply a mounted museum specimen. It's a unique symbol, the legacy of a bygone era in a Pennsylvania that can never be revisited.

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****From Fifty Years a Hunter and Trapper, edited by A. R. Harding, Columbus, OH, c. 1941***



Ted's Rock

*Most sportsmen have a favorite spot,
one that's brought good luck and good
times over the years.*

THE FIRST TIME I saw the rock was in 1966. I remember standing on the hillside, 75 yards away, thinking what a good vantage point the 15-foot summit would offer. Curiosity, and perhaps fate, made me move closer to the moss covered giant.

Surprisingly, the route to the top was much easier than I expected — my boots seemed to find just the right crevices. As I scanned the surrounding countryside, I felt this spot had to be one of the best deer stands in all of Pennsylvania. Visibility in three directions was excellent and the fourth

revealed a stand of pines that provided ideal cover. Well-used

By H.T. Montgomery II

deer trails crisscrossed the hillside, reminding me of an old road map. A large stone resting atop the rock provided me with a place to sit almost as comfortable as a chair.

My mind began to ponder the possibilities of Seneca Indians or buckskin-clad frontiersmen waiting in ambush from this very spot. How many other hunters had watched magnificent whitetails pass within view in previous centuries?

But most of all I wondered why the rock was unoccupied at nine o'clock on the opening day of buck season. Nevertheless, I was there now, and from that very first moment I christened the ancient remnant of the Ice Age, "Ted's Rock."

At the time, I could hardly have imagined that I would feel the same way nearly a quarter-century later. However, into the 1990s, everyone in our hunting party knows of this rock and the success stories it represents.

I wasn't there even three hours before it began to pay dividends. Two doe burst from the pines and headed for the stream some 100 yards below. Shortly thereafter shots sounded on the adjacent hillside, followed by shouts from other hunters.

"He's coming your way, Bill."

Bang . . . bang . . .

"George! Down toward you!"

Bang . . . bang . . . bang . . .

Moments of silence then preceded the sound of a running deer. The buck decided the large bush located near the creek was too large to go around, so it burst through the center only to find itself lined up with the front sight of my Winchester .32 Special.

My shot was good as the big 6-pointer folded immediately. I worked my way off the rock, down to what would be the first of many whitetails I would take from this site.

While I was preparing to field-dress the buck, three hunters came over to investigate. One of the men was convinced he had also hit the deer. There was only one entrance and exit wound, however, and when we backtracked the deer we found no evidence of hair or blood.

1968 produced a big one-antlered 4-point taken late on the opening day, and a heavy 5-point dropped within 60 yards of the rock in 1972.

It was 1974 that brought one of our most memorable hunting excursions. A cold early December day found me perched on what had become my favorite stand. If I could have picked anywhere in the world to be at that moment, it would have been right there. Rising over the oak ridge, the early morning sun was giving the snow-covered ground a much warmer appearance than it actually deserved. Gray squirrels were gathering nuts while finches and sparrows were flying nervously from branch to branch.

Several doe had made their way past my lofty perch as I remained undetected. The sight of another doe brought me to attention. She stopped within 50 yards and looked over her shoulder. A slight wag of her tail convinced me another deer would soon follow, and follow it did. A plump Clarion County 3-point came bounding into view.

Once my crosshairs centered on the shoulder my season was over. After field-dressing I started the drag back to the Scout located about 300 yards away. My uncle, Jack Reed of Oil City, met me part way after hearing my shot. Customary congratulations were given as I told him my story.

"I'll tell you what, Jack. If I were you I would go down to my rock. Deer are moving real good through there today," I said.

"Are you sure you don't want some help dragging yours back?" he asked.

"Heck no. I've got all day. Go down there and get a big one."

I waited until I could see his blaze orange sweatshirt on top of the rock before continuing my drag. The Scout was in view when I heard Jack's .300 Savage speak. A broad smile crossed my face as I knew Jack had

scored. After loading my deer and casing my rifle I headed back down the trail to help him. I had gone only a few yards when I could see him walking briskly toward me. His grin could mean only one thing — more venison on the pole.

"Where is he?" I asked.

"I need your help, Ted. I've got him tagged and dressed, but I can't get him up the hill by myself. You told me to get a big one and I sure did."

His large 7-pointer proved to be quite a handful as we struggled to get it up the hill to the trail. Friendly ribbing took place as Jack teased me about shooting small-racked deer. I countered by telling him of the modest fee I was going to charge for guiding services.



THE SIGHT of another doe brought me to attention. A slight wag of her tail convinced me another deer would soon follow, and follow it did.

The following Saturday yielded yet another buck. Ches Confer, the third member of our hunting crew, took a 5-point early in the morning. Three bucks in one season; Ted's Rock continued to gain popularity.

Shooting the first buck to come along was a mistake not only in 1974 but also in 1976. Shooting time had arrived 10 minutes before I'd spotted two deer

standing in brush less than 30 yards away. As the lead deer stepped into a perfect shooting lane, I could easily see his six gleaming white points. I quickly calculated the odds of the second deer being a bigger buck as astronomical. The crosshairs centered on the buck's neck, the hammer was pulled back, and a gentle trigger squeeze dropped the deer in his tracks.

For what seemed like an eternity, the second deer stood still, partially concealed, looking at its traveling companion. As it turned and ran up the hill, I saw it had a rack much larger than the one I had just claimed. Shots at the top of the hill downed what I found out later in the day was a fine 10-pointer.

My success continued into 1978. Each deer season my Aunt Lorraine prepares delicious homemade ham salad sandwiches for Jack and me. They've become almost as strong a tradition as opening day itself. I had just unwrapped a sandwich and had taken a few bites when I saw a deer moving slowly out of the pines a mere 50 yards away.

I cautiously pushed the sandwich into my coat pocket before bringing the .32 to my shoulder. As I let out half of the large breath I had inhaled, I managed to fog my scope so badly it was beyond use. With my eyes still focused on the

browsing buck, I used my glove-clad thumb to clear the scope lens.

Bringing the scope back up revealed more problems. Not only was my glove covered with ham salad, so was my lens. The relatively easy 50-yard shot through the scope quickly became a 100-yard shot with my optional iron sights.

Fortunately, the results were satisfactory; I nicknamed the 5-point "The Ham

Salad Buck."

The span from 1980 through 1984 was the only dry spell I've ever had since finding the rock. Two of the years, other hunters had beat me to the stand. In two of the other years opportunities were there but I failed to connect.

A driving rain storm combined with a buck running on all eight cylinders accounted for one of my misses. The other was caused by me simply getting caught off guard. But just like a good wife or a good bird

dog, a prime hunting site is next to impossible to give up. Better days lay ahead, I was sure.

As the 1985 season arrived, my determination to break the somewhat self-imposed jinx was at an all-time high. By 6:30 I was taking sandwiches out of my pockets and laying them next to me. (I learned from the 1978 fiasco.)

As I sat there, a chill came over me as the cold December wind began to penetrate my old Woolrich hunting coat and mix with the perspiration formed while I was crawling over the downed tree tops. Unfortunately, logging activities had reduced what had been long range viewing opportunities to 100-yard close-ups.

The early morning hours produced numerous doe, thus reinforcing my expectations of seeing a buck. I've always

We couldn't have written a better script. When Jack entered the upper end of the pines, a doe and buck exited the other. Within minutes I'd taken the biggest buck of my life.

thought that the longer I go on stand without seeing a buck, the more likely it becomes that one will soon appear. This philosophy enabled me to stick it out when other, less successful hunters may have moved on.

Around 11 o'clock, Uncle Jack worked his way over to the rock. I immediately noticed he was without his rifle; he had downed a 5-pointer earlier in the morning and had been relegated to the role of a driver. He stayed with me for half an hour before he decided to go back to work.

"I'll walk through the upper end of the pines," he said. "Now when the big boy comes through, don't miss."

"Tell you what, buddy: You kick him out and I'll put him down."

Well, as it turned out, we couldn't have written a better script. When Jack entered the upper end of the pines a doe and then a buck exited the other. Within five minutes my rock and I had claimed the biggest deer of my life — a beautiful 7-pointer with a 19½-inch spread. The jinx had ended.

The following season failed to produce a buck, but from the rock I saw one of the most fascinating sights any out-

doorsman could ever imagine. The biggest black bear I had ever seen, with four cubs behind, paraded right by the rock. Had their tracks not remained in the snow, I would have thought I had been dreaming.

More recently, the 1987 season produced a spike for me and a one-antlered 3-point for Ches on the last Saturday of the 1988 season. Doe season in 1988 brought me a regular and a bonus deer from the now well-used rock.

I'm sure that one day, when the beautiful hills of Pennsylvania become too steep for me to climb or after I'm no longer on this earth, the rock will remain.

Perhaps right now a father is holding a young son or daughter

who will one day join him in the deer woods. Sometime in the next century, that young hunter may climb to a rock peak, look over a majestic mountain stream, gaze into towering pines and say to himself, "Wow, I wonder if anyone has ever hunted from here before."

If you feel you are in the presence of an Indian, a frontiersman and a hunter dressed in an old red Woolrich coat, rest assured you are at the right spot. Treat it gently and don't ever give up, because you're on Ted's Rock.



ONE OF the most fascinating sights was a big black bear accompanied by four cubs. If I hadn't seen their tracks in the snow, I'd have thought I was dreaming.

Trappers association holds national convention in York

The National Trappers Association is holding its national convention and sports show at the York Fairgrounds on Aug. 5-8. The gathering features 275 exhibitors inside the fairgrounds complex and 150 tailgaters in the parking lots. The focus is on trapping, predator calling and hunting, and there will be seminars and demonstrations throughout the four days. Admission is a one-time \$5 fee, and kids under 14 get in free. The convention runs until 8 p.m. Thursday, Friday and Saturday, and until about noon on Sunday.

A Hunter's First Year

By Richard Tate

MY SON, BOBBY, turned 12 in 1991. Although he enjoys fishing and participates in athletics, he's had a passion to become a hunter since he was only five or six years old.

I certainly encouraged his desire. I bought him his first BB gun when he was six and a .22 when he turned nine, and dragged him on scouting and hunting excursions as soon as he was up to the task. By his 12th birthday he had developed fairly good woods skills and had learned to shoot competently. In fact, he had won the boys' division BB gun shooting contest at the 1991 Jaffa Sports Show in Altoona.

To continue his development, just prior

to the 1991 small game season, I enrolled him in the Alexandria 4-H instructional shooting program, figuring expert instructor Roy Lightner could further hone his skills.

With the summer of '91 came time for Bobby to take his Hunter-Trapper Education course. After some deliberation, I decided to send him to the Commission's Hunter Education Camp held at Camp Maple Lake near World's End State Park. Though the regular hunter-ed courses are excellent, I figured the three-day camp had even more to offer.

Bobby had an upset stomach the day we left him at camp, but I attributed it to



A GRADUATE of the agency's Hunter Education Camp at World's End State Park, Bobby Tate turned out to be a good hunter. Just prior to the season, his father enrolled him in a 4-H shooting program to hone his skills. When squirrel season came, Bobby was ready.

nerves, figuring he'd straighten up as soon as Donna, my wife, and I left. However, when we returned three days later, the camp nurse informed us that Bobby had been genuinely ill, but he wouldn't let anybody call us to come for him. He was determined to complete the course, no matter what.

Bobby had performed so courageously that at the camp graduation ceremony he was presented with a special award by the camp director, I&E Supervisor Ed Sherlinski.

"This award is for a young man who really worked hard at this camp," Sherlinski said. "This young man overcame sickness, insisted on completing his hunter safety course and participating in all the camp activities. He earned this Perseverance Award. His parents should be very proud of him."

Ed then presented Bobby with a new Buck knife. Though we felt like real heels for having left him there feeling ill, Donna and I were indeed proud of Bobby's perseverance. It was certainly a special moment for the three of us.

As the small game season approached, Bobby, my dad and I made several scouting trips, looking for squirrels, turkeys and deer. We even discovered a couple places where there was an abundance of acorns for the first time in 10 years. Bobby and I decided to spend the squirrel season opener in a remote part of the most productive oak stand.

The squirrels were active, but Bobby was excited and his shooting was affected. It wasn't until late in the afternoon that he finally downed his first squirrel, a plump gray.

During the two weeks preceding the regular small game season, Bobby settled

down and began to connect on almost every squirrel that presented a decent shot. When his .22 barked, it usually meant another squirrel for his mother to cook. In fact, I was glad for the arrival of turkey season because I was getting tired of cleaning squirrels, although Bobby had cleaned the last couple he'd shot.

The turkey season opener was uneventful, even though we were hunting good ground. It was one of the places we had seen birds prior to the season. The day's high-

light came when a little spike buck walked to within 10 feet of us at the first place we stopped to call. Bobby scared him away by tossing a stone at him.

Although we ran into fresh scratchings a couple times during after-school hunts the next week, we never bumped into any birds, and by Friday we thought we owed Donna a night out. She had been extremely patient.

Later that evening, Rich Roller, probably

the best autumn turkey hunter I know, paid us a visit. He had run down a group of turkeys. "They're already broken up," he told us, "and I think they'll call in the morning. You and Bobby ought to try to get one."

We mapped out a strategy where each of us would have a chance to collect a turkey without interfering with one another. Depending on what the turkeys did in the morning, Rich and I both planned to do some calling.

It dawned brutally cold for early November — 15 degrees when I checked the thermometer at 5:30. Bobby dressed in the warmest clothes he had: a snowsuit under his camouflage. I dressed in heavy insulated underwear under my camo. Even so, after we had been situated for only 10



A PROUD young hunter hoists his first autumn turkey. The boy downed the bird with a fine wingshot from a Model 12 20-gauge.

minutes or so, I knew we were going to get cold.

The morning cold quickly set Bobby and me to shivering. However, a couple turkeys began to call at first light, and despite our discomfort, Bobby insisted that we stick it out, that we try to call up a bird. I didn't have any luck, though, and by 7:30 the turkeys had all shut up — except one. I could hear it clucking not far from where Rich had planned to set up, and before long I heard a shotgun blast from his position.

I told Bobby to get ready, that maybe Rich's shot would send a turkey our way. It did. A moment after Rich's shot we saw a turkey lift into the air and fly our way. Bobby was on one knee, tracking the bird with the old Model 12 20-gauge shotgun his grandfather had loaned us for the season.

As soon as the turkey was overhead, Bobby fired. I expected a miss, but the bird folded and fell to the forest floor. "I got him!" Bobby cried excitedly.

"Get to it," I yelled. "Don't let it get up. Turkeys sometimes run after being hit."

Bobby moved quickly to the downed bird, with me following closely. A follow-up shot wasn't necessary. My young nimrod had accomplished something I never did: hit a flying turkey.

After tagging the plump hen, Bobby agreed that we should try to call up another bird for me. After a fruitless hour of calling, however, we gave up and took the bird home to show off.

We saw Rich later in the day. The turkey Bobby shot had sneaked in behind Rich, giving him only a snap shot as it ran to take off. Truth be told, Rich was glad he missed the turkey. I think he was happier that Bobby had killed it.

The successful turkey hunt did not end our hunting season. After Bobby shot the turkey, we went back to squirrel hunting

with .22s. Not only was it fun to hunt with a scoped .22, it was good practice for the upcoming deer season.

By the time deer season arrived, Bobby had downed quite a few squirrels with the rimfire. More importantly, he had developed into a safe, competent hunter who had learned to remain calm at the moment of the trigger pull. When the opening day of buck season arrived, I believed he was ready to down a buck if one came our way.

The weather forecasters were predicting rain on the opener. I told Bobby that if it rained, we would sit it out. I have endured miserable experiences hunting deer in the rain, and I didn't want Bobby's initial deer hunt to be a negative one. When we got up at 4:15, however, it wasn't raining.

We even stayed dry during the hour and a half hike to the crossing we had chosen, too, but at eight o'clock the rain began.

Dad, who had hiked in with us, arrived at our stand at 8:30. "I'm heading in," he announced. "I'm not staying out in this."

"Want to leave, Bob?" I asked.

"No. We've seen three deer already, and I think we ought to stick it out. I don't want to give up yet, and anyhow, it's not raining too hard yet."

Bobby was pretty emphatic about staying put, so Dad wished us luck and departed. The rain continued steadily for the next half-hour, though we both remained relatively dry under our ponchos. Then around 9:30 the rain abruptly stopped. I was elated and, as I put our ponchos on top of the day packs behind the tree we were sitting under, I hoped it wouldn't start up again.

We ate a couple sandwiches and drank some hot liquid Jello. The mid-morning snack revived both of us.

Time ticked slowly for me until about 11

The large doe eased downhill and bedded below us. Bobby kept a vigilant watch over her, making sure she didn't grow a set of antlers.

o'clock. I wanted to see some deer, but none were moving through. It's certainly the wrong year not to see a buck, I thought. Bob's first year, and we're not even seeing any deer.

Bobby, however, was enjoying the outing, despite the dearth of deer. Squirrels were busily scampering about, and Bobby heard, then saw, his first raven. "It looks like a giant crow," he chuckled.

Bobby also teased me when he noticed me shivering. "Cold, Dad?" he said, laughing, and when I admitted I was, he pretended to shiver. Not once did he grumble about not seeing deer. He was much more patient than I was.

Finally, at 11 o'clock, a couple deer appeared. A doe and her fawn quietly came into view on a well-worn deer trail to our right. They were feeding through, digging for acorns, oblivious to our presence. Suddenly, after we had watched them for five minutes the doe threw her head up, sniffed the air, and bounded off, the fawn close behind her.

Winded

"They smelled us, Dad. See how the air is blowing that way?" Bobby said, and he puffed a cloud of vapor that drifted toward the deer trail. I told him that we must stink.

"Yep. I hope the wind changes direction if any more deer come up that path," he observed. I agreed.

No more than 10 minutes later a large deer appeared to our left. "It's a big one, Bob. See if it's a buck."

It was a large doe, and she eased downhill and bedded down below us. As she lay there, Bobby kept a vigilant watch over her, making sure she didn't grow a set of antlers. Just before noon I saw a flicker of white below a deadfall below us and to our right.

"Bob," I hissed as I recognized that the flicker had been made by a deer twitching its tail. "Some deer coming up the trail to our right. Get ready."

The first to come out from behind the deadfall was a large doe, and she was closely followed by a small deer of the year.

The third deer that emerged was larger than the second one, and right away Bobby could see that it sported a set of spikes. I checked the wind. It had shifted in our favor. The deer wouldn't smell us as they got closer.

The trio was in no hurry. It took them several minutes to come into an open area about 50 yards to our right. My young nimrod patiently awaited the shoulder shot I'd instructed him to take, one that makes for certain kills. The buck finally turned broadside to us, giving Bobby a good shot. "Now," I whispered softly.

He eased back the hammer of his .30-30 and calmly squeezed the trigger. At the gun's report, the buck somersaulted and crashed to the forest floor. I had Bobby work another shell into the chamber, then had him ease down the hammer.

"If he gets up, shoot him again," I told Bobby, and we approached his downed buck. There was no need for him to shoot again. Bobby had hit him right where he had aimed.

The next several hours were part of Bobby's learning experience, too. We tagged the buck, field-dressed it with a knife a friend had given him, and I identified the various organs he asked about during the process. We also took time to examine the buck's stomach contents. Its stomach was filled with acorns.

It took more than two hours for us to drag Bobby's buck to my little pickup, and fortunately the rain held off until we got him loaded. Only then did the heavens open up.

But the Red Gods had smiled on us, allowing Bobby to enjoy the taste of success on his first buck hunt, joining his Uncle Bill and his Pap Tate, who also collected bucks that day.

Bobby's first year of hunting was splendid. Not only was he a successful hunter; the year also let us spend a lot of time together doing what we both like to do. Bobby's enthusiasm made the 1991 hunting season the most enjoyable hunting season I have had in many years. It was a special autumn for both of us.



FIELD NOTES

Cause for Concern

CLARION COUNTY — Last year I helped WCO Dave Beinhaul apprehend a man for riding a dirt bike on SGL 63. The violator wasn't going very fast, so I trotted some distance behind him for about a mile, relaying his location to Dave via hand-held radio. Dave said the transmissions were hard to understand because of my heavy huffing and puffing. Fortunately, the rider turned around to head back and I was able to stop him. Joyriders often refuse to stop, but I think this one may have had some concern that the bug-eyed, red-faced WCO needed medical assistance. — WCO Alan C. Scott, New Bethlehem.



Gesundheit

VENANGO COUNTY — Last spring I met with a man who'd accidentally killed a hen while shooting at a gobbler. While we were filling out a mistaken kill affidavit, the man's two tame gobblers came up to us. We made hen noises to them, but neither bird responded. Then I sneezed and both toms gobbled. Maybe I've found a new calling technique. — WCO Leonard C. Hribar, Seneca.

Thanks, Glenn

My hat is off to Glenn Clark of Greenville for using his retirement to work for our future. Using a number of Commission handouts, he put together a school program, and in one month he gave it to more than 3,600 students in eight school districts and two parochial schools. Glenn has set an example for all of us to follow: We need to get a wildlife message to our school students. — Information & Education Supervisor Bob MacWilliams, Sandy Lake.

Falconry In Reverse

Back in February as I trained my beagle I saw a goshawk land in a tree below me. The bird was watching intently in the direction my dog was running a rabbit, but it took off when it spotted me. Last fall another goshawk made a pass at a rabbit my beagle had jumped. The rabbit escaped into the brush at the edge of a pipeline. It almost seems as if avian predators enjoy hunting rabbits with a beagle as much as I do. — LMO Stephen L. Opet, Tamaqua.

Curtains for Uncle Eddie

MERCER COUNTY — I recently investigated a report by a Farm-Game cooperator concerning someone shooting on his property. The shooter had been using live trees as backstops and bottles as targets, had littered and had cut the man's fence. I talked to a nearby cabin owner and showed him the damage. The man claimed ignorance, but while we were looking at the cut fence and the broken bottles his 6-year-old son said "Uncle Eddie did that." Apparently, "Uncle Eddie" and I will have to have a little talk about his lack of respect for other people's property. — WCO Donald G. Chaybin, Greenville.

Harder Ground

During my first self-defense class in almost 17 years, I've found the ground seems to be getting a little harder. I've also noticed my former partner, now a defense instructor, hasn't developed much compassion over the years. Have you, Lenny? — LMO Pat Anderson, Titusville.

Guilty As Charged

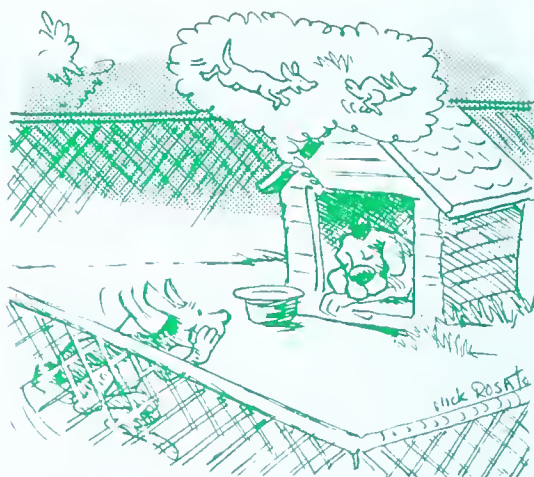
WESTMORELAND COUNTY — A skunk had found its way into the basement of District Magistrate Eckels' office. The odor was so overpowering that the office had to be closed. When I arrived, I cautiously entered the basement, Magistrate Eckels following me for backup. Luckily, the skunk had fallen asleep in a metal container. I pronounced the skunk guilty of trespass and carried the container to my vehicle to pass sentence: relocation. — WCO Joseph V. Stefko, Greensburg.

Start Your Own

CUMBERLAND COUNTY — The county's week-long junior conservation school, administered by dedicated volunteers, exposes interested teens to a host of conservation, natural history and outdoor recreation experiences. I believe it is one of the most worthwhile programs a young person could join. If your county doesn't have a youth conservation school, perhaps it's time to start one. — WCO Jim Binder, Shippensburg.

Living History

In a hedgerow on SGL 182 stands a monument to habitat management. It is a magnificent white oak more than 15 feet in circumference and well over 200 years old. One can only guess how many tons of acorns the tree has produced and how many new oak trees it's responsible for. Now that the tree is in decay, it is providing nesting cavities for many animal species. — LMO Bruce C. Metz, Schwenksville.



Asleep at the Switch

POTTER COUNTY — My three beagles are the finest rabbit dogs in the whole county, maybe in the entire state. Of course, I may be biased. Dog owners tend to take pride in their animals, so I couldn't help laughing when I heard about a local rabbit hunter whose dog slept while a rabbit hopped around its pen. I can't tell you the man's name, but he knows who he is. — WCO William C. Ragosta, Coudersport.

A First

BRADFORD COUNTY — A woman called about a roadkilled tiger, saying it was a big cat with a short tail. I said it was probably a bobcat and that I'd be right out. Well, when I got there I found a gray house cat, with black stripes and black rings on its tail. Of all the unusual phone calls I've gotten over the years, this was my first roadkilled tiger call. — WCO William A. Bower, Troy.

One Last Reminder

CLEARFIELD COUNTY — Attention muzzleloader hunters: Don't forget to buy your flintlock stamp by the end of this month. July 31 is the last day to purchase it, and you don't want to miss out on a great hunting experience. (I hope you're reading this, Dad.) — WCO Colleen Shannon, Luthersburg.

Proud Workmanship

ADAMS COUNTY — I conducted a teachers' wetlands workshop on SGL 249 last spring. On the pond, where waterfowl nesting devices had been installed several years ago, were hundreds of ducks and about half as many geese. The devices had been refurbished, and new ones had been put in place. The teachers were impressed with the pride in workmanship the property exhibited. Thanks go to Jim Shook, Tom Barney, Toby Bowers, Hop Milhimes and Freddy Sistrunk. — WCO Steven M. Spangler, East Berlin.

Extinction Is Forever

MONROE COUNTY — While many wildlife species have learned to coexist with humans, some have not. The ones that couldn't adapt became extinct. We are continually forcing wildlife into ever-smaller pockets of habitat, threatening the chances of survival for many species. If we don't soon change our ways, we may doom more animals to extinction. — WCO Thomas M. Smith, Bartonsville.

In Favor

FRANKLIN COUNTY — During a recent exhibit at the Chambersburg Mall, we fielded many questions regarding changes to our antlerless deer system. I found that once people read the Commission's information sheet, most appreciated the new and simpler licensing procedure. — WCO Frank Clark, Fayetteville.

Recreation Rules

ERIE COUNTY — State game lands provide a wealth of recreation, and during the summer months they're great places to hike, take pictures, watch birds and fish. Please take a moment to review the game lands regulations posted on the green signs. Following the rules helps everyone have a good time. — WCO Jack Farster, Albion.

Vital Traps

INDIANACOUNTY — If you happen upon one of the agency's bear traps, please leave it alone. The traps provide invaluable research data, but they're often sprung or sabotaged by misguided people who think we're trying to trap all the bears out of an area. The data we get from trapping keeps our bear management program on a scientifically defensible footing. Anti-hunters have been able to block hunts in states that didn't have enough data to justify sport hunting. — WCO Arthur S. Hamley, Beyer.

Save Yourself Some Trouble

LUZERNE COUNTY — I've had two incidents within the past year in which people came in contact with rabid wild animals. For your own protection, leave wildlife alone. You'll save yourself a lot of time, pain and suffering. — WCO John A. Morack, Drums.



Roman Centurion

Mike Mitchel, who lives near Shelocta, frequently has bears visit his house. One day, putting out his trash, he laid an old mattress in the backyard and shortly thereafter put out a bag of garbage. A bear came in and claimed the garbage bag as his own. He carried it over to the mattress, sprawled out, tore open the bag and dined like some kind of Roman centurion. — Information & Education Supervisor Barry K. Moore, Saltsburg.



Thieving Dam Builders

ERIE COUNTY — When Ted Janosik returned home from Georgia after a winter of trapping, he found someone had been stealing the firewood he'd stacked along a stream on his property. Upon further investigation, he discovered beavers had been taking the logs to build a dam. — WCO Wayne Lugaila, Waterford.

Working Together

The Stony Valley chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation recently bought tree protectors that were placed on newly planted seedlings on SGL 84. The Line Mountain High School Conservation Club and a Girl Scout troop from Winfield helped plant evergreens in the same area. This is what working together for wildlife is all about. — LMO Keith P. Sanford, Mifflinville.

SPORTing Assistance

CAMBRIA COUNTY — Mel Rummel and Brook Harshire were hunting grouse last fall when they saw a man shoot a doe. They went over to tell him they were going to report the crime, and the man fled. The pair called the region office, and deputies Wayne Ellenberger and Richard Riek responded. With the sportsmen's help, the deputies were able to apprehend the suspect — who eventually pleaded guilty. — WCO Shawn Harshaw, Nanty Glo.

Sixth Sense

CHESTER COUNTY — Deputy Mark Wahn seems to have a sixth sense when it comes to wildlife. Last season, while checking a hunter's license, a man was complaining about a lack of pheasants. But when Mark closed the door of his truck, two ringnecks exploded from the brush. This past spring, while talking to an outdoor writer during a goose roundup, Mark was asked if he could help the writer photograph some fawns. "How about those two?" Mark asked, pointing to a pair of fawns standing 50 yards behind the writer. — WCO Dan Yahner, Honey Brook.

Looking Brighter

Last spring I participated in a field exercise with several Grove City Middle School students. We were trying to determine recreational uses for some city-owned property. I could tell by the nature of their questions and by their enthusiasm that these young people will make good stewards of our environment. Our future is looking brighter. — LMO James Deniker, Sandy Lake.



All-Nighter

Wildlife often does unexpected things. George and Rose Lovell of Troy told me about a grouse they heard drumming all night long last spring; he began at sundown and continued until sunrise. — LMO Chester J. Harris, Milan.

Help With Pheasants

JUNIATA COUNTY — One of the Sichuan pheasant release sites is here, and we'd like to involve the public in this long-term restoration study. If you'd like to help with stocking, flushing counts, censuses or observation reporting, please contact me through the Southcentral Region office. — WCO Dan Clark, Honey Grove.

Have No Fear

ELK COUNTY — Many people were concerned that this year's big blizzard killed a lot of deer and turkeys. Although we may have lost some animals due to snow conditions, the only dead deer I saw were killed either on the roads or by dogs, and the only dead turkey I found had been illegally killed. — WCO Dick Bodenhorn, Ridgway.

Low Mortality

FOREST COUNTY — I was surprised to find only a few dead deer along the streams during my winter deer mortality survey. I was certain there would be more because of the heavy snows. We did find coyote sign around some dead deer. Either the coyotes had killed the whitetails or they were feeding on winter kills. — WCO Alfred N. Pedder, Marienville.

Get 'Em While They're Hot

LUZERNE COUNTY — I recently completed a three-day assignment at our exhibit at the Kingston sports show. I was amazed at the growing demand for our Working Together for Wildlife patches. A limited number of these are manufactured each year. Last year's patch was sold out by December, and the 1993 patch, which features the black bear, appears to be even more popular. Don't allow your collection to be incomplete; buy the '93 patch for \$3 before it's too late. Your investment supports the Game Commission's wildlife programs. — WCO Edward J. Zindell, Wilkes-Barre.

Oh, Yeah? Take That

WYOMING COUNTY — After getting complaints from Sugar Hollow residents about a bear upsetting trash cans, bird feeders and beehives, Deputy Gene Gaydos — a resident of the hollow — set a culvert trap. Gene spent half a day preparing the trap, and that night, as if in retaliation, the bear struck Gene's backyard. It destroyed his bird feeder and dragged his trash up the hill. The bear then went down the road and destroyed all the neighbor's bird feeders, just to show he meant business. — WCO William Wasserman, Tunkhannock.



Dead On

ALLEGHENY COUNTY — When I talk to Scout groups I usually take along several animal pelts. I use them while explaining how the animals live and where they can be found locally. The talk is usually followed by a question-and-answer session. At one of these, when I asked what all the animals had in common, one Scout quickly replied "They're dead." — WCO Richard T. Cramer, White Oak.

Flooding Hurt Nesting

Flood conditions on the Susquehanna River caused some nesting problems for waterfowl last spring. Locally, Canada geese are often on the nest as early as March. This year many had to re-nest in order to bring off a brood. — LMO Clay VanBuskirk, Millerstown.

Deer damage program increases to 16 counties

THE COMMISSION announced it will expand the deer damage farm program — in which properly licensed hunters can take deer of either sex during regular firearms buck season on designated farms — to 16 counties.

At the June 7-8 meeting in Harrisburg, Deputy Executive Director Steve Williams said the pilot program begun last year in Bedford, Crawford, Indiana and Schuylkill counties will now also include Armstrong, Berks, Clearfield, Dauphin, Erie, Fulton, Greene, Huntingdon, Susquehanna, Wayne, Wyoming and York.

During the traditional buck season, hunters possessing the proper county-specific antlerless tag may harvest a buck or a doe on lands enrolled in the Deer Damage program *only in those 16 counties*.

The announcement came following a study of the success of last year's program. Farmers in the four pilot counties expressed increased satisfaction with the program, which is designed to alleviate deer damage to crops. Landowners were pleased that more antlerless deer were taken off their farms.

Executive Director Pete Duncan reported that the unreserved balance in the game fund was about \$43 million. But he pointed out that the agency will soon begin cutting into its reserve, spending more money on its programs than it takes in. The Commission will likely seek a license fee increase in several years.

The wildlife management bureau said no changes will be made to this year's antlerless deer allocations. The Commissioners had directed staff at the April meeting to make a determination on winter kill; the agency could have adjusted allocations in counties that experienced high mortality. According to surveys by field officers, winter kill was not significant.

The bureau also updated the Commissioners on a number of other topics:

- ♦ Otter stocking on the Youghiogheny River had to be postponed indefinitely because of water quality problems resulting from the blow-out of a deep mine near the Casselman River.
- ♦ Beaver harvest was up 9 percent for the 1992-93 season, which was extended in three furbearer management zones. The take was 4,506 beavers.
- ♦ Bald eagle nesting success was down this year. Although 16 nesting attempts were made (including two new sites) bad weather resulted in fewer young being produced.

The Bureau of Land Management unveiled its Volunteers for Wildlife program. This undertaking, long awaited by many, formalizes the process by which clubs and individuals can assist the agency with habitat and game lands maintenance work.

The bureau also was pleased to announce a milestone in the streambank fencing program, which has now protected and enhanced habitat along 100 miles of Pennsylvania streams. Look for a report on the dedication of the 100th mile in an upcoming issue of *Game News*.

In keeping with the agency's commitment to buy land for future generations, the Commission approved the purchase of more than 430 acres at a cost of nearly \$130,000.

On the law enforcement side, the Commission voted to revoke the hunting and trapping privileges of 481 people for infractions of the Game and Wildlife Code.



Early goose season expands

The state will again hold a September goose season directed at our large resident Canada goose flock. The season structure in the Southeast has been expanded, contingent on U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service approval, to include three new counties and five additional days.

It's expected the Service will soon approve adding Berks, Chester and Delaware counties to the Southeast for the early hunt, which already includes Bucks, Lehigh and Montgomery counties. Also, in the Southeast area only, the season will run Sept. 1-15.

The season in the Northwest is Sept. 1-10, as it was last year, and the area will not change: Butler, Erie, Mercer and Crawford counties (**except** that portion of Crawford bounded to the north by Route 6 from the Ohio line to the intersection of routes 18

and 322, southwest on Route 322 to the intersection of Route 58, and west on Route 322 to the Ohio line).

The daily bag limit is five Canada geese per day, 10 in possession, in the Southeast, and three per day, six in possession, in the Northwest.

In addition to a valid hunting license, hunters must have in their possession a valid federal duck stamp and a September Canada goose season permit. Sportspeople may begin applying for the free permits on July 1.

Mail requests to PGC Goose Permit, 2001 Elmerton Ave., Harrisburg, PA 17110-9797. Permits will be mailed beginning in mid-August.

Hunters will again be required to keep a daily record of their hunting activity and harvest. The Goose Harvest Report Card provided with the permit must be returned to the Commission by Sept. 20.

Lititz artist wins contest

Stephen Leed, a self-taught artist from Lititz, Lancaster County, has won the Commission's Working Together for Wildlife fine art contest.

His winter scene featuring a pair of cardinals, four chickadees and a tufted titmouse will be the program's 1994 print. It was selected from among 43 entries submitted by Pennsylvania wildlife artists.

Leed, 41, was born in Lancaster and is a 1969 graduate of Warwick High School. Interested in art and wildlife — particularly birds — since he was a youngster, Leed became a full-time artist a little over two years ago.

The contest format required artists to illustrate winter birds in a natural Pennsylvania setting. Leed's winning entry, done in oil, was inspired by a late March 1992 snowfall.

"I'm just thrilled about having my painting selected by judges as the best

entry in the contest," Leed said. "It's something I've dreamed about."

This is Leed's first print contest win. He placed second in a Partners in Flight art competition staged by the state of New Hampshire in 1992.

Taylor Oughton, whose ruffed grouse was selected as the 1992 winner, placed second to Leed. Another former winner, Laura Mark-Finberg, was third. Marie Brummett was fourth, and Susan Yoder was fifth.

The Working Together for Wildlife program has raised more than \$1 million through art, patch and seedling sales. The funds are used for nongame projects.

The 1994 Working Together for Wildlife print will go on sale in early December. For additional information, contact the Game Commission, Dept. MS, 2001 Elmerton Ave., Harrisburg, PA 17110-9797.

22nd Class begins training at PGC headquarters

Members of the 22nd Class of wildlife conservation officer trainees are enrolled at the Ross Leffler School of Conservation in Harrisburg. The school lasts nine months, at which time the trainees will graduate and be assigned to fill vacant WCO and LMO positions. They are listed below, along with hometowns and counties.

<u>Name</u>	<u>Hometown</u>	<u>County</u>
Matthew D. Belding	Dalmatia	Northumberland
David A. Carlini	Brockway	Jefferson
Darin L. Clark	Portersville	Butler
Michael J. Doherty	Lititz	Lancaster
Douglas E. Dunkerley	Fredonia	Mercer
Thomas P. Grohol	Hazleton	Luzerne
Christopher B. Grudi	Palmyra	Lebanon
Guy A. Hansen	York	York
Roger A. Hartless	Edinboro	Erie
Theodore Hutchinson	Grindstone	Fayette
Christopher P. Ivicic	Bellefonte	Centre
Scott D. Jurista	Tunkhannock	Wyoming
Kerry J. McDivitt	Saltsburg	Westmoreland
Frederick M. Merluzzi	Lehighton	Carbon
Jeffrey G. Mock	Coburn	Centre
Keith W. Mullin	Mt. Joy	Lancaster
David L. Stewart, Jr.	Sigel	Jefferson
Scott W. Tomlinson	Ligonier	Westmoreland
Gary R. Toward	Sarver	Butler
Edward J. Urban	Swoyersville	Luzerne
Joseph G. Wenzel, III	Selinsgrove	Snyder
Jacob A. Wishard	Centre Hall	Centre
Albert G. Zellner	Hazleton	Luzerne

Taxidermy exam scheduled for September

The Game Commission will conduct a taxidermy examination for permit applicants Sept. 13-15 at the South-central Region office in Huntingdon.

Applications are available at region offices and the Harrisburg headquarters. Completed applications, along with the appropriate fee, must be returned to district WCOs by Aug. 13.

Everyone who performs taxidermy work for others must have a permit issued by the Game Commission.

The taxidermy examination consists of three parts, including the presentation of five specimens prepared

by the applicant within the past three years. Required specimens include an antlered white-tailed deer head; small mammal; adult ringneck pheasant; ruffed grouse, bobwhite quail or wild turkey; duck or other waterfowl; and a fish. Specimens must be wildlife found in Pennsylvania.

The second phase of the examination deals with taxidermy methods and procedures. The third portion requires applicants to perform some part of the taxidermy process on a selected specimen. Passing scores must be attained on all three parts of the examination.

Technician rescues Woodward bats

Back in March, following the big blizzard, a combination of melting snow and heavy rain threatened a colony of hibernating bats in Woodward Cave. Cave owner Pete Burd phoned Wildlife Technician Cal Butchkoski to tell him a back room of the cave was in danger of flooding.

Woodward Cave, located in Union County, is one of the few commercially operated caves in Pennsylvania that still houses hibernating bats. At last count, more than 1,500 bats were spending the winter there.

While the hibernacula is made up mostly of little brown bats, other species such as the northern long-eared (rare), small-footed (threatened), big brown and eastern pipistrelle also use the cave.

"It's one of the more significant sites in the state," Butchkoski said.

"We've got everything but Indiana bats there, so it's important both in terms of numbers and species."

Butchkoski arrived about 7:30 p.m., and by eight o'clock he'd launched a canoe bound for the back of the cave. Working alone with only a flashlight, Butchkoski began plucking the sleeping bats from their purchases on the cave walls — beginning with the ones that were in immediate danger.

After an hour and a half, Butchkoski had removed all the bats he could find from the cave room and had paddled them to a safe area. One by one, he stuck some 400 bats back on the walls — made possible by a reflex action in their rear feet. Most were little brown bats, but he also rescued 12 northern long-eareds, about half the cave's population of that species. — PGC Biologist Jerry Hassinger

PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES who require special assistance at Game Commission public functions should contact the telephone number listed with the announcement, the appropriate region office or the Harrisburg headquarters. Toll-free numbers for each region are listed in every issue of *Game News*; the Harrisburg number is (717) 787-4250.

In Memoriam

Harold Douglas 1914 — 1992 Laborer Retired 1980	Maxwell Ostrum 1901 — 1992 WCO Retired 1963; 34 yrs.	Richard W. Oliver 1943 — 1992 LMO Died in service; 24 yrs.	Delbert L. Batcheler 1929 — 1992 Wildlife Conservation Education Specialist Retired 1970; 41 yrs.
Fredrick G. Weigelt 1926 — 1992 WCO Retired 1987; 31 yrs.	Samuel C. McFarland 1920 — 1992 WCO Retired 1980; 32 yrs.	Thomas F. Bell 1906 — 1992 Chief, Law Enforcement Retired 1966; 32 yrs.	Hayes T. Englert 1900 — 1992 Assistant Chief, Law Enforcement Retired 1963; 40 yrs.
Jay Foore 1918 — 1992 Surveyor Technician Retired 1981; 11 yrs.	Jean L. Paxton 1926 — 1993 Clerk-Typist Retired 1986; 18 yrs.	Earl L. Lorah 1914 — 1992 Land Utilization Asst. Resigned 1952	Roger J. Wolz 1928 — 1992 WCO Resigned 1967 (Serving as Commis- sioner upon his death)
Edwin W. Flexer 1912 — 1992 WCO Retired 1974; 38 yrs.	Paul M. Rice, Jr. 1944 — 1992 Laborer Died in service; 24 yrs.	Anna M. Roebuck 1899 — 1992 Domestic Worker Retired 1966; 30 yrs.	

Archers post record harvest

The latest Commission figures show archery is gaining in popularity, and that bowhunters are taking more deer. Archers, who now number 309,012, killed a record 25,785 deer — 18,958 buck and 6,827 antlerless — during the 1992-93 seasons.

The sale of archery stamps continued to increase annually at a rate of about 4 percent, a trend noted in recent years. The number of stamps sold

indicates about one in three licensed hunters in the state is a bowhunter.

Last season, archers had an additional, bucks-only week added to their season. This year the archery season will be six weeks long, beginning Oct. 2 and continuing to Nov. 13.

Flintlock hunters took 613 buck and 11,792 antlerless deer for a total harvest of 12,405. Just over 103,000 muzzleloading licenses were sold.

REMINDER TO ANTLERLESS AND FLINTLOCK HUNTERS: There is a new timetable for purchasing antlerless licenses and muzzleloading stamps. County treasurers will begin accepting antlerless applications through the mail on Aug. 2 (Aug. 16 for nonresidents). Flintlock hunters who want to hunt during the muzzleloading season must purchase the required stamp no later than July 31. While flintlock hunters must give up their antlerless license applications, they are eligible to apply for bonus tags.

Middle Creek, Pymatuning lecture schedule

Lectures at the Middle Creek Wildlife Management Area Visitors Center, located near Kleinfeltersville, begin at 7:30 p.m.

Scheduled for the next several weeks are: "Edible Wild Plants" by educator Kermit Henning, July 7-8; "Bald Eagle, Osprey and Peregrine Falcon Recovery" by PGC Biologist Dan Brauning, July 21-22; and "Bobcat Natural History and Research" by PGC Biologist Jack Giles, Aug. 11-12.

Early next month Middle Creek will host its popular annual wildlife art show. Admission is free. Dates and times are Aug. 6, noon to 8 p.m.; Aug. 7, 9 a.m. to 8 p.m.; and Aug. 8, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Lectures at the Pymatuning Wildlife

Management Area Visitors Center, located near Linesville, begin at 2 p.m.

Scheduled for this month are: "Bald Eagle" by Pymatuning staff, July 3-4; "Snapping Turtles" by Wildlife Technician Chuck Toma, July 10; "Rare and Endangered Flora and Fauna of the French Creek Valley Area" by LMO Rob Criswell, July 11; and "Man Trailing Bloodhounds," a search and rescue demonstration by Tom Roberts, July 25.

On the first of August, Pymatuning will hold its seventh annual wildlife photography contest. For more information, write the visitors center at RD 1, Box 8, Linesville, PA 16424, or call (814) 683-5545.

Commemorative revolver available

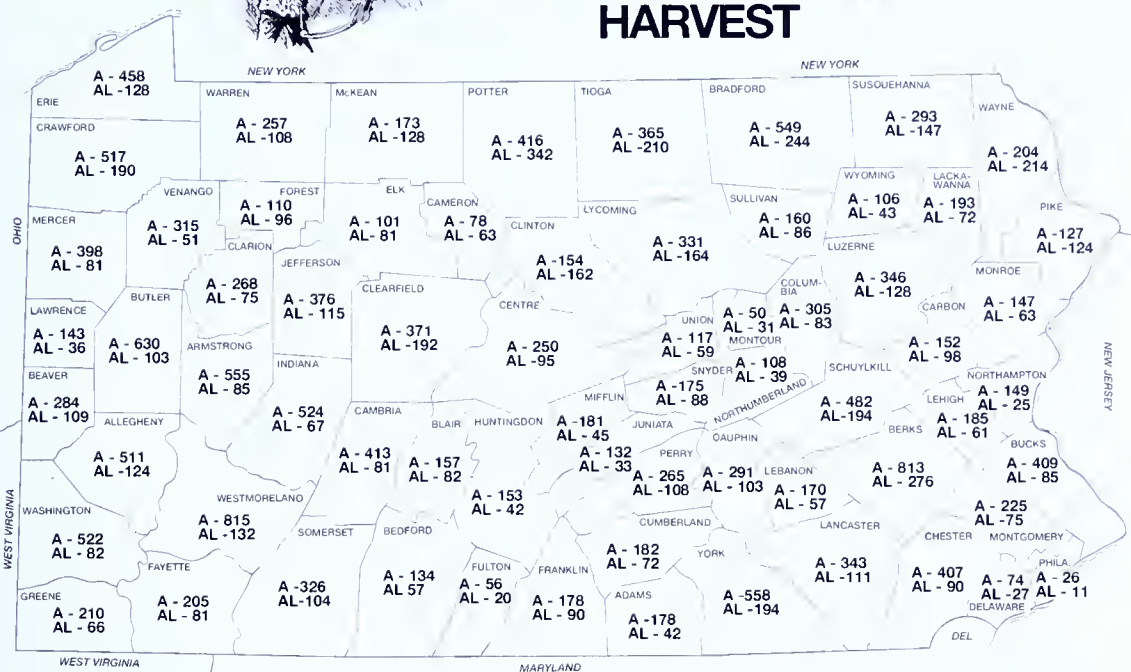
A commemorative revolver recognizing the Commission's 100th anniversary is available from Pennsylvania Police Supply. An edition of 900 Smith & Wesson 586s is being produced.

The gun features the agency's logo on the frame and "1895 — 100-Year Anniversary — 1995" on the 4-inch barrel. The gold decorations are on the

commemorative's presentation side.

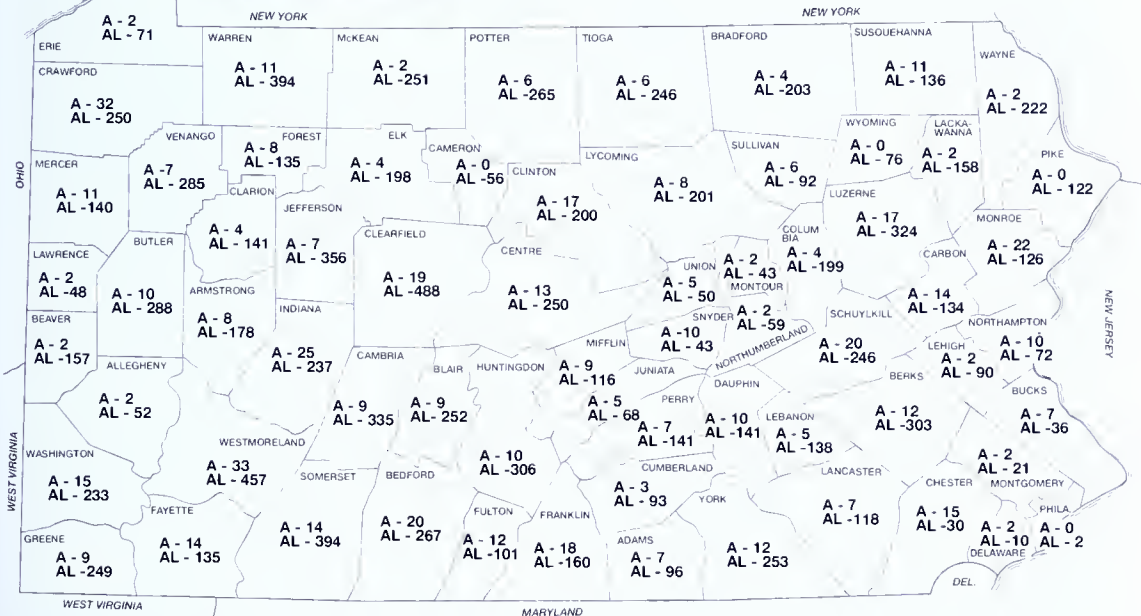
The revolvers are \$495 each, plus sales tax for state residents. Personalizations and display cases are also available from the supplier.

For more information or to place an order, write Pennsylvania Police Supply, Rt. 40 East, P.O. Box 249, Chalk Hill, PA 15421, or call (800) 437-1801.



COUNTY TOTALS	18,856	6,770
COUNTY UNKNOWN	102	57
TOTAL	18,958	6,827

A black and white line drawing of a long-barreled rifle and a large, curved horn or gashorn lying on a patch of ground with some sparse vegetation. The rifle is positioned diagonally across the frame, with its barrel pointing towards the upper right. The horn is placed horizontally across the middle of the rifle's barrel.

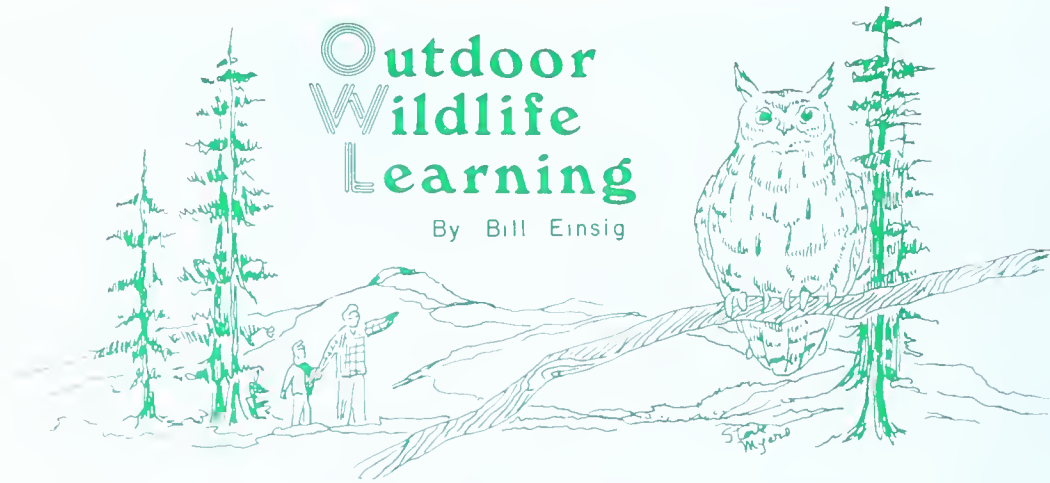


COUNTY TOTALS	605	11,737
COUNTY UNKNOWN	8	55
TOTAL	613	11,792

GRAND TOTAL FLINTLOCK DEER HARVEST 12,405

Outdoor Wildlife Learning

By Bill Einsig



Noxious Weeds

MY SPRINGTIME garden is always full of rich, verdant growth. The vegetable patch produces blossoms and fruits by the end of April, while every flower bed fills with colors that overflow the edge and creep into the growth of new grass. I'm certain my neighbors marvel at this spectacle and actually look forward to it each year.

Eventually, I find the time to pull all these weeds and plant more acceptable varieties, which never seem to do as well as the weeds or become as productive as my neighbor's garden.

For example, last spring I spent two evenings pulling a carpet of chickweed from one small herb area, another evening clearing new maple seedlings from a large planter, and I still had hours of weeding remaining. Without question, I have the best crop of weeds in the neighborhood.

But there are weeds and then there are *weeds*. My weeds are nuisances and fairly easy to control if I keep after them. Other weeds, however, present serious problems, particularly to farmers. These serious pests often reproduce quickly and spread over large areas in short periods of time.

Other pernicious weeds reproduce by persistent rootstocks or rhizomes that are difficult to control once established. Such weeds are more than just troublesome nuisances. They represent significant economic losses to farmers each year.

These are "noxious" weeds and are serious

enough that specific laws have been enacted to control their spread.

Pennsylvania declared Canada thistle a noxious weed in 1862 in an effort to control the spread of this common and what had already become troublesome plant. Chicory and marijuana were added to the noxious weed list in 1939 and johnsongrass joined the group in 1980.

Then, in 1982, the legislature passed HB 1429, the Noxious Weed Control Law. This law replaced all the former weed control acts and added multiflora rose.

The 1982 Act also established a Noxious Weed Control Committee with the power to modify the list as needed. In 1989, this committee added six more species to Pennsylvania's "hit list" of truly bad weeds.

This act makes it illegal to "sell, transport, plant, or otherwise propagate" any noxious plant in the commonwealth. It also empowers the Secretary of Agriculture to declare any area with a severe infestation a "weed control area." Landowners within the area would then be required to control the noxious plants on their land.

The 11 plants on the list are classified as noxious for somewhat different and interesting reasons. Some are common but a few may not have yet invaded your part of the state. Get to know them.

Canada thistle (*Cirsium arvense*)

This common thistle was a troublesome

weed in some parts of Europe nearly 400 years ago. It was probably brought to America by both French and English settlers in the 1600s as a contaminant in hay seed. It became the earliest recognized noxious weed and, unfortunately, continues to thrive and spread despite our best efforts to control it.

Canada thistle is a perennial that expands into colonies with an extensive system of spreading roots. Left unchecked, this thistle can form large patches of 4-foot stems that smother other plants. It also produces large numbers of airborne fruit. This species blooms from June through August and is the only thistle in our area with male and female flowers on separate plants.

Canada thistle can significantly reduce the yield of most crops and harbors several insects that attack certain vegetables such as corn and tomatoes. If the term "noxious" needs one plant to be its prime example, Canada thistle is it.

Chicory (*Chicorium intybus*)

I have this one. Who doesn't? Chicory is that tough-stemmed weed that throughout most of the summer has pretty blue flowers that close around noon. Technically, each of those blue flowers is a flower cluster. Each blue petal represents one separate, complete flower.

In the late 1700s, chicory was brought to America as a garden vegetable. It was raised for its crop of leaves, much as dandelion, and is related to both endive and escarole. Each chicory plant produces more than 3,000 seeds and can quickly spread to almost any waste ground. It also imparts a bitter taste to milk from cows that have eaten it.

Marijuana (*Cannabis sativa*)

Marijuana has been cultivated for so long that no one is certain of its origin. It was grown for its hemp fibers at least 8,500 years ago and was cultivated in both Asia and Europe.

Marijuana came to America in the 1500s and was planted in many colonies in both North and South America, primarily for the fibers which could be used for cloth, rope, twine and other cordage. It was grown exten-

sively in Pennsylvania prior to the Revolutionary period.

Marijuana has escaped and grows wild. It is not truly an agricultural weed; its designation as a noxious weed stems from its legal status as a recreational drug with psychoactive effects.

Multiflora rose (*Rosa multiflora*)

Here's an example of a great thing gone wild. When seeds of multiflora rose were brought to this country over a hundred years ago, they represented just one of the thousands of rose types that had been cultivated for centuries. This native of the Orient offered gardeners a new rose that grew long, rambling stems covered with numerous small white or pale pink flowers. It has a very hardy rootstock and is used as the stock on which many rose varieties are grafted.

Rosa multiflora was used extensively as a ground cover and as a wildlife planting. The dense mass of thorny stems can provide an effective wall to separate fields and contain livestock, slow drifting snow, and provide food and cover for wildlife. It is truly a "living fence." It is also a prolific seed producer and spreads rapidly to fields where it is not wanted. Once established, it is difficult to control.

Johnsongrass (*Sorghum halepense*)

Johnsongrass was brought to this country about 1830 and introduced into South Carolina and Alabama as a promising new hay and forage crop. Its lush growth grew rapidly and provided valuable livestock food.

By the turn of the century, however, johnsongrass had become almost uncontrollable throughout most of the South. It occurs in some southeastern Pennsylvania counties today, but it does not survive well in areas where the ground freezes more than six inches down.

Johnsongrass is a perennial sorghum that spreads from thick, underground stems (rhizomes). The above-ground shoots die back each year, but the rhizome often survives to spread a new crop each spring. Johnsongrass also produces many seeds that are dispersed by wildlife, flooding and through the spread of manure from animals fed johnsongrass hay.

This robust plant reaches seven to 10 feet in height, with a stem diameter of an inch or more. Leaves are a foot or more in length and about one inch wide.

Shattercane (*Sorghum bicolor drummondii*)

Because sorghums interbreed readily, cultivated sorghum and johnsongrass have genetically mixed to form many different varieties. The name "shattercane" is used to describe a group of closely related varieties that resemble johnsongrass but differ primarily in being annual rather than perennial plants.

Mile-a-Minute (*Polygonum perfoliatum*)

I first found mile-a-minute nearly 20 years ago, growing in southern York County. I could key it to the genus but no further. I later learned the plant was a relatively recent import from Asia and wasn't included in the botanical keys I was using.

Apparently, mile-a-minute was a hitchhiker on rhododendron plants shipped about 1946 to a nursery in Stewartstown, just a few miles from the Maryland state line in York County. The thorny vine has now spread to 20 Pennsylvania counties and has also been found in New Jersey and Virginia.

Mile-a-minute grows rapidly as a thin, annual vine that covers all other vegetation. Its stem is lined with downward curving thorns which can deliver severe cuts to the unwary passerby who grabs a handful without first looking. Appropriately, "tearthumb" is another common name for this weed, even though that term usually applies to two other *Polygonum* species.

Mile-a-minute leaves are unmistakable. They are perfect triangles with a 2- to 3-inch base. The flowers are not outstanding, but the berry-like fruit are a pretty, deep blue.

Jimsonweed (*Datura stramonium*)

Jimsonweed is a highly toxic plant that has caused death of both humans and livestock. Its fruit capsules fling thousands of dry seeds up to 10 feet or more from the parent plant, and the seeds remain viable for a long time.

Eradication is difficult because many seeds germinate erratically, so there always seems

to be a supply of seeds in the soil even after all the growing plants have been killed. Harvesting crops in fields invaded with Jimsonweed is difficult and may even help spread the seeds.

Musk thistle (*Carduus nutans*)

Musk, or nodding, thistle is a common spiny plant in weedy, untended areas along roads, railroads and other waste areas. The stems can grow to more than six feet. A single, nodding pink flower head blooms from June through July. A single plant can produce up to 10,000 seeds, resulting in perhaps 3,000 new plants.

Bull thistle (*Cirsium vulgare*)

Bull thistle is similar to musk thistle but is somewhat larger and has large, erect purple flower heads blooming in July and August. Bull thistle flowers also are often solitary and may be found in clusters of two or three.

Kudzu vine (*Pueraria lobata*)

During the first half of this century, kudzu was highly promoted as a valuable hay crop and groundcover. It even had its own fan club spreading the word about how this fantastic Japanese import grew up to a foot a day and reached lengths of nearly 100 feet. But the second half of this century revealed kudzu for the problem it represents.

In 50 years kudzu ran the gamut from the promise of an agricultural boon to the reality of rapid, nearly unrestrained, choking vegetation.

Kudzu is a perennial vine with large, three-part compound leaves. It grows from thick rootstocks and, in warmer southern states, extends its coverage each year. In Pennsylvania, fortunately, kudzu vines normally die back, but the rootstocks send out new shoots each spring.

For a summary of the Noxious Weed Control Act and more information on noxious weeds, contact the Bureau of Plant Industry, Department of Agriculture, 2301 N. Cameron St., Harrisburg, PA 17110-9408. Ask for the booklet on Act 1982-74. You can also get Weed Circulars on each species from this office.

This Way & That

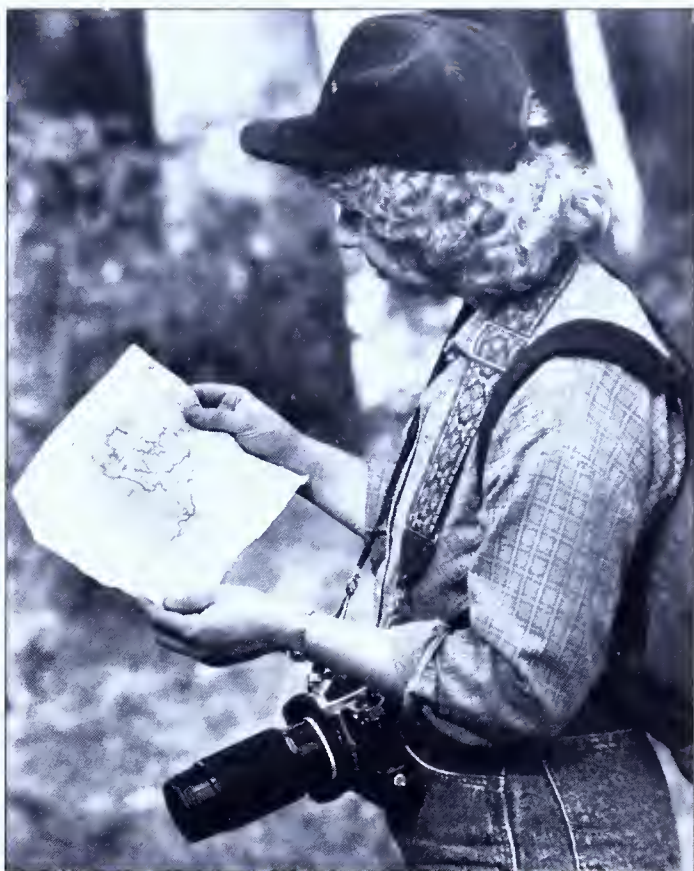
THE MAP couldn't be wrong. We'd driven up Dents Run Road and all the landmarks were there. I counted the correct number of forest trails to the right, the stream running steadily on the left. In the car, I periodically checked my topographic map, my state forest map, and the hand-drawn map a friend had given me.

I should have known all wasn't well when the dirt road we were on split in two. The left fork crossing the creek wasn't on any of the maps. Later, afoot on the mountain trail, I should have suspected a mistake when the branch path on the map never appeared. The turn to the right began to cut downhill instead of following the mountain top into the elk fields I'd visited before, when we'd entered these woods from a different direction.

Some time later, the trail ended at a gate in a creek valley. It felt like we had circled back to Dents Run again. But the sun was now behind us, the creek was flowing the wrong way, and it was on the wrong side of the road. Where were we?

The only possible explanation was that we were now on the other side of the mountain. Hicks Run was the first valley east of our starting point. The compass and the colors in the western sky didn't lie — no matter what I might think of the truthfulness of my map and my own sense of direction.

It would have been only a good laugh, if the car wasn't miles away on our backtrack, and even farther away by road. My husband did the chivalrous thing and hiked over the hill again, while I sat on a camp porch in the growing dark, wondering where the



MAPS CAN LEAD you into — and out of — some of the best hunting and hiking, places that perhaps not everyone goes.

map or I had gone wrong. I knew I'd get a ribbing about it later. I was the map-toting "navigator" on this excursion, and it was my shortcut that had brought us to this end.

You'd think an experience like that would cure a person of her fascination with maps. Instead, we returned to the area the next year. I just had to find out where I had erred. A passing state forest employee set me straight. I showed him the map, he

Another View...

by Linda Steiner

PGC Maps

To help sportspeople get the most from their outdoor enjoyment, the Commission offers individual state game lands maps and regional maps.

Game lands maps depict a specific state game lands, and they show streams, roads and towns in the surrounding area, and trails, roads, parking lots, and prominent natural land features on the game land. Scale is either 1 inch = 2,000 feet or 1 inch = 4,000 feet, depending on the size of the tract. Many also have 100-foot contour lines.

Region maps, often referred to as Sportsmen's Recreation Maps, cover the agency's six field regions. These 24x36-inch multi-colored maps — printed on Polyofefin for extreme durability — feature public and leased lands open to public hunting and other forms of outdoor recreation. Also shown are municipalities, roads, drainage areas, 100-foot contour intervals and many other physical features.

State game lands maps cost 50 cents each and must be ordered by game lands number. Region maps cost \$4 each and are ordered by region. If you're unsure about which maps you want, write for a PGC map order form. Order from the Pennsylvania Game Commission, Dept. MS, 2001 Elmerton Ave., Harrisburg, PA 17110-9797.

asked for a pencil, and drew a line that hadn't been there before.

"Here's your problem," he said, grinning. "The new road."

At home, I have a file drawer filled with maps and brochures. Would you like to see the road system of the Allegheny National Forest? Interested in Raystown country or the Poconos, Endless Mountains or the Laurel Highlands? I have maps from the Pennsylvania portion of the Appalachian

Trail to the Youghiogheny River Gorge. Besides this state, I can take you, on paper, to pathways in LaVerendrye Park in Quebec, Mount Desert Island in Maine, the National Lakeshore of Michigan's Upper Peninsula, and Lost River in the great state of West Virginia.

To some of us, maps are better "wish books" than sporting goods catalogs. They're wonderful for making trips you never plan to take, and making plans for those you will. I've been to more places in my imagination on maps, and I've had maps explain afterward what I had seen in reality.

Some maps show no more than intersections of roadways. Others have landscape features in great detail, every rise and fall, every tree line, water trickle and jeep trail. I especially like maps with public lands outlined, so I know where I can go.

Sometimes I need to buy several maps — county road maps, state forest maps, timber company maps, wildlife agency maps, federal land maps, commercially produced maps — to locate contiguous acres of public ground. It can be fun to piece them together, although it's difficult to juggle all that paper in the front seat of a car.

Perhaps my favorites are the sportsmen's maps that have extra little notes and drawings, eye symbols to locate scenic overlooks, marks that cite abandoned lumber towns, and trivia of how many board feet of timber were rafted out in 1880-something. I like the local lore tucked in map corners, how some Pennsylvania pioneer perished in a snowstorm or some first settler was jumped by a panther in the lonesome mountains.

I enjoy maps with sketches of leaping deer, flushing grouse, jumping trout and blooming mountain laurel among the landscape lines. Their positioning may not be accurate, but I believe I could go to that spot and find the illustration come to life.

Many maps are based on U.S. Geological Survey maps. Being able to decipher landscape secrets from cryptic contour lines is a big help both practically and to the dreamer. But there are a couple of problems

with USGS quadrant maps. One is that they are unmanageable. Unless they are spread out on a floor or table, their large size makes an extra set of hands necessary.

The other problem with USGS maps is time. Users should check when their maps were last updated. In the lower right-hand corner is the map date, with perhaps a second date of photo revision. Some of the maps that are purchased new may have been photo revised 20 years ago, or may be reproductions of even older originals.

Most sportsmen buy a topo map of a hunting area only once in their career. As they change through the years, so does the landscape of the map. Fields are now woods, woods may have been cleared for fields, roads may be abandoned or added, land may have been strip mined, or mines may have been closed and the land gone wild again.

In my house, we "improve" official land maps by adding comments of our own, marking an X and "Five gobblers, 9/3/92," or "Albino doe, 7/25/89." One such map is posted on a bulletin board near the back door, the entrance most-used by hunters with muddy boots. This county map is crisscrossed with our own notes, a sort of private wildlife history of the local area.

I'm surprised at how much attention the map attracts. If friends haven't visited for a while, they check the map to see what we've been seeing, or what they hope to see

on their trip. What was there once might be there again, and the map doesn't lie.

Whether trying to read the landscape, or trying to figure out game, we outdoors-people can't seem to do without maps. Impromptu ones may be the best. These "napkin maps" are drawn with pen or pencil over diner lunches and camp dinners. No napkin map is complete without a colorful sampling of menu selections somewhere in the corner, and a degree of soggy-ness.

Unlike the standard symbols of USGS productions, napkin maps cannot be deciphered without being there for the commentary. A line could be a road, trail, power line, creek, or the meandering way a turkey walked. An X, a box or a circle could be a deer, tree, house or hunter, depending on the code. Dashed lines usually mean the direction someone or something traveled, should travel, or would have traveled if things had worked out right.

Napkin maps are chronicles of the outdoor life, but few are preserved, and with good reason — they would have to be refrigerated. Homemade maps record plans of expectation, and explanations of failure. Many successful deer drives have been mapped out on paper napkins, and many hunters have sketched how the game eluded the whole gang. Maps are the past, the present and the future, if only we make the correct turning.

***Maps are the past,
the present and the
future, if only we
make the correct
turning.***

Cover painting by Doug Pifer

Summer brings hot, hazy days and a longing to do something other than mow the lawn. For many Pennsylvania hunters, summer is one of the best of all seasons because it means woodchucks. Most farmers will be more than happy to allow hunters on their lands to remove these pests. Groundhogs can provide great sporting opportunities, and for more than just long-range rifle shooting, too. They can be hunted successfully with rimfire rifles, bows and shotguns at close ranges. If nothing else, groundhog hunting can be a great introduction for a new or fairly inexperienced hunter — a laid-back time in which to teach him or her about safety, ethics, responsibility and the other ingredients that make a good hunter.

Voluntary adherence to an ethical code elevates the self-respect of the sportsman, but it should not be forgotten that voluntary disregard of the code degenerates and depraves him.

—Aldo Leopold
A Sand County Almanac

“BINGO!”

“Bingo?” I asked, sitting bolt upright.

“Sure did,” said Marshall as he slid back into my patrol car. “There’s fresh blood and deer hair all over the bed. We lucked out.”

It was pitch black outside, and a cold, dismal mist was falling. Deputy Marshall Stover and I had been searching the sleeping village streets for hours, trying to find a red pickup. Dismayed, we were finally heading out when Stover spotted it.

“There’s a red truck,” he said assuredly, as if trying to convince himself. It was in the driveway of a two-story house at the end of the village. Jammed among five other vehicles, it could easily have been missed in the murky night.

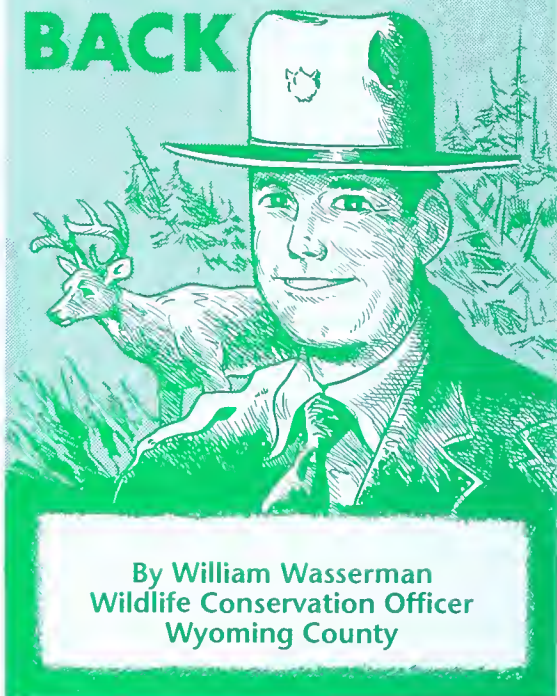
We were acting on a tip from an anonymous informant who told us he had just watched a man named Amos Crud carry a deer from his pickup into his house. Although deer season was closed, the thought occurred to me that nearly half our anonymous calls turn out to be pranks.

Marshall and I walked over to the truck, an old beat-up Dodge. The rear bumper, painted flat white, displayed a grapefruit-size blood stain that looked like a big bullseye.

Shining my flashlight into the bed I saw junk scattered everywhere. Dozens of crushed beer cans, steel cable, cardboard, dirty rags, old lumber, empty oil cans and plastic bottles littered the rusty bed. A spare tire was covered with gore, as if a can of cranberry sauce had been dumped on it, and everything else was splattered with blood.

While I inspected the bed, Marshall checked the cab. He saw a spotlight

LOOKING BACK



By William Wasserman
Wildlife Conservation Officer
Wyoming County

laying face down on the worn seat. Next to the spotlight was a half-empty box of .22 Mag. hollow points. On the dashboard were two cartridge belts containing .222 Remington bullets. One was full, the other almost empty. Aside from the seat and steering wheel, they were the only things in the cab not covered with a layer of dust.

A thin line of blood trailed along the canted flagstone leading to Crud’s front door, indicating the deer had been taken into the house.

Marshall covered the rear while I peered through the glass storm door into a well-lighted mudroom. Blood spatters on the tile floor led under another door into the main house. I knocked and a man stepped heavily into the mudroom and opened the storm door.

“Are you Amos Crud?” I asked.

“Yeah,” he said nervously.

“I’m a state conservation officer. I want to talk to you about the blood all over the back of your truck.”

Crud’s eyes deadened as if a pair of shades had been drawn behind them.

"Oh that. That's from a roadkill," he said. "Picked it up tonight. Is that a problem?"

Marshall came from behind the house and stood beside me. "This is Officer Stover," I said. "Do you mind if we step in from the rain?"

Amos Crud stood gaping at us. "Guess not," he muttered sourly.

We walked in. I asked for identification, and Crud took out his wallet and handed me his driver's license. He was a big man — over 200 pounds and at least six feet tall. Ragged, straw-like hair fell to his shoulders, and what looked like three days' worth of rough stubble covered his meaty face.

After recording some information in a notebook, I handed back his license and he offered me a broad, sallow grin; his jagged, decayed teeth probably hadn't seen a toothbrush in years.

"Where is the deer?" I asked.

"It's gone."

"Gone? Gone where?"

"I threw it in the river. It was all mangled up. I couldn't get much meat off it."

The north branch of the Susquehanna, a few hundred yards from his house, had been boiling at flood stage for more than a week. I cocked a curious eyebrow and pursed my lips reflectively.

"The deer ought to be halfway to the Chesapeake by now," I said sarcastically. "Guess we'll just have to take your word that it was a roadkill."

Crud said nothing.

Looking at the blood on the floor I said, "Looks like you brought it right through the house."

"I did. C'mon, I'll show you."

Marshall and I followed Crud and the blood trail into his kitchen. A teenage girl glanced up dully as we passed. Dressed in worn-out jeans and a faded cotton shirt, she sat by a table littered with scraps of meat. A cutting board and boning knife were next to her.

Crud walked past her and paused by a door at the opposite end of the room. He turned, grinning, and Marshall and I



Question

May I hunt with a laser sight on my bow during the archery season?

Answer

No. It is not permissible to hunt with any bow or firearm equipped with a sight that will project or transmit any light beam or other beam outside the sight or scope onto the target.

followed him into the garage. Traces of blood disappeared down a floor drain, and from overhead a meat hook dangled on a chain attached to the ceiling.

"See, there's no deer here," Crud said cheerfully. Behind him on a dirty window sill, its paint peeling in gnarled scabs, was a rusty carpenter's saw — the jagged teeth choked with fleshy pulp and twisted strands of deer hair.

"I'd like to look in your freezer," I said.

"Be my guest. You ain't gonna find nothing. C'mon," he said, walking back into the kitchen, pointing toward a small adjoining room. "The freezer is over there."

An upright freezer stood along the left wall; a stack of newspapers and assorted rubbish piled on top of it. There was a man lying on his back on a rumpled cot several feet away. "Come on in," the man beckoned. "Want a drink?"

"No thanks, I'm on duty. I just want to look inside this freezer for a moment."

"Well, go ahead," he said, slowly propping himself on an elbow. "Sure you don't want a drink?"

"I'm sure," I told him. He was in his late 50s with a broad face and notice-

ably receding hairline. His remaining hair was almost shoulder length and white as snow, and he had a gray-white beard that was thick and wild.

I opened the freezer door, surprised to find it well-stocked but without venison. "What's your name, sir?" I asked.

"Amos Crud," he replied.

"Is this your house?"

"No, my son pays the rent. What's the matter, officer?"

"Your son brought a deer into the house tonight. We'd like to know what happened to it."

"Don't ask me. I've been lying here all night, drinking. Wanna look under my bed?"

"Why, is a deer under there?" I asked.

"Nope."

"Then why would I want to look under your bed?"

"I dunno, just thought you might," he said slurringly.

I walked back into the kitchen. The young girl, still sitting at the table, stared vacantly as I entered. Marshall's eyes shifted behind me; he nodded suggestively. Following his gaze I saw a pot of water on an old coal stove with some kind of meat simmering.

"What's cooking?" I asked Amos.

"Deer meat," he said, quickly adding, "backstraps that a friend gave me last year."

They had been illegal to possess since July, I knew, but sticking with his story I said, "And you just decided to cook them tonight, right?"

"That's right." Crud agreed.

"Where's the meat from the deer you cut up tonight?" I asked.

"I ate it," Crud said.

"All of it?"

"Yep. Didn't get much." Crud's hand brushed a thick straggle of hair from his face and he gazed at me. He knew I didn't believe him, but all he cared about, I figured, was whether I could prove anything, not what I thought of him personally.

"Do you own any guns?" I asked.

"Yeah, I own a few."

"Mind if we look at them."

"They're upstairs," he said. "Come on, I'll show you."

Marshall and I followed Crud up a long wooden staircase, gingerly stepping over dirty clothes, old beat-up toys and slick, portly roaches that disappeared into tiny cracks with astonishing speed. A few dallied, and Amos Crud's motorcycle boots eagerly crushed them as he ascended ahead of us.

He led us down a narrow hallway littered with clothes and into his bedroom. An unmade double bed was on the left wall, upon which a woman's bathrobe had been tossed in a loose pile. Dirty clothes were strewn across the floor, and to our right, in a small alcove, was a child's mattress. "Who sleeps there?" I asked.

"One of my kids," said Crud.

"How many do you have?"

"Four."

"Where are they?"

"They took off with my wife to see her dad. Why?"

"Just curious," I answered. A feeling of despair washed over me, knowing his children lived in such squalor.

Crud opened a wall closet and reached inside, causing me to quickly unsnap my holster, but he never noticed.

Commission 800 Numbers

Within Pennsylvania, use the agency's toll-free 800 numbers to contact a wildlife conservation officer. For the Northwest Region, call (800) 533-6764; Southwest, (800) 243-8519; Northcentral, (800) 422-7551; Southcentral, (800) 422-7554; Northeast, (800) 228-0789; and Southeast (800) 228-0791. Phones will be manned around the clock during the major hunting seasons, and about 15 hours a day at other times.

He slowly pulled out five firearms, all in cases, and laid them on the rumpled bed. Marshall unzipped each one, checking calibers.

"Do you own a .222?" he asked Crud. "Nope."

"Then why do you have .222 ammunition in your truck?"

"They're my dad's."

"I see. Is your dad's gun here?" asked Marshall.

"Naw — he'd never get it back if it was." Crud grinned with a smile that looked almost feral. "He keeps it at his place."

"Mr. Crud," I said, "all the deer meat in your house is illegal; we're going to confiscate it."

Crud scratched his head and blinked blankly. "Go ahead, take it," he said with a shrug.

We went downstairs, and Amos watched as Marshall and I gathered the venison scraps from his kitchen table. We also took the simmering backstraps from his stove, placing all the meat in plastic bags.

"By the way," I asked, "where did you pick up the deer tonight?"

"Oh, a couple miles from here."

"Want to show us? There should be some evidence on the road, blood or skid marks—maybe even some broken glass or plastic."

"The deer wasn't on the road; it was in a field," Crud declared. "My dad and I were spotlighting and we saw it lying there. There might've been some blood, but with this rain we probably won't find anything now."

I was certain Crud and his father were jacklighting and had killed the deer, but I didn't have any hard evidence. I suspected that Crud's wife had taken the meat and left with her children before we arrived.

There was no deer, no gun and no witness who saw the deer being shot — but it was time to stop playing dumb.

"Mr. Crud, I think you and your father shot the deer," I said. "Your story is just too convenient: You threw the deer in the river, you ate all the meat, the gun we want to see isn't here, the backstraps are from a friend. And now you're telling me the deer wasn't on the road but in a field."

"I'm going to give you an opportunity to level with me. Perhaps we can come to a mutual understanding. Otherwise, I'll file charges against you and your father for possessing a deer killed in closed season, and you can tell your story to a judge and see if he believes you."

Crud thought for a few seconds. "I believe in our judicial system. I'll take a hearing," he said with a grin.

Marshall and I took photographs of the truck, and I filed charges against Amos Crud and his father, Amos Crud (they didn't use Jr. or Sr.). Both were found guilty of possessing a deer taken in closed season and sentenced to pay \$500.

The younger Crud was also convicted of possessing deer meat after the license year, with an additional \$500 penalty. Both had their hunting privileges revoked for three years.

The Game and Wildlife Code excludes roadkilled deer as a defense in any judicial proceeding, but that isn't the sole reason they were convicted. With a defense riddled with lame excuses, improbable coincidences and questionable circumstances — no matter how assertively they're uttered — it's hard to convince a judge. In any judicial hearing, credibility needs to be established, and a lack of that aspect has been the downfall of many violators.

Inside Looking Out

“SUMMERTIME, and the living is easy,” or so the old Gershwin song claims. Not for a naturalist, though, because summer is when the natural world reaches its zenith of productivity — especially the insects — here in the central Appalachians. So I am out as early as possible, before the buzzing gnats are reactivated by the rising heat and humidity of a steaming July day.

By 10 in the morning I have already retreated to the cloistered coolness of our old farmhouse. From there I can watch the wildlife that congregates in our yard, breeds on our porches, beats against our windows, and even blunders into our home.

Viewing is most productive through our upstairs windows. My study, for instance, overlooks the side yard, a tangle of weeds, the lower lawn, and a laurel-covered, wooded mountainside. Last July 22, I was sitting and writing in my armchair when I heard the crackling of dried leaves below. Moving quietly to my screened window, I looked down on a hen turkey with seven small poults foraging in the side yard. Slowly I eased myself to the floor and had a ring-side seat for observing the interaction between a female turkey and her young.

She jumped up on to a two-foot-high log, and one by one the poults flutter-jumped to join her. When she leaped off, they followed after her, peeping quietly, threading their way over, around and un-

der the clutter of weeds, branches and vines through which their mother pushed with little regard for the difficulties they presented to her youngsters.

Eventually she reached the edge of the woods where she leaped onto a fallen tree four feet from the ground, joined this time by only two of her young. The others kept flutter-jumping, falling short of their goal, and tumbling back to the ground, peeping loudly all the while.

She ignored their cries, but not those of two crows in the woods. After looking intently around in search of danger, she flexed her wings, jumped back down to the ground, and paraded slowly into the woods, still followed by her stumbling, peeping young.

That was not the first time I have watched a hen turkey and her poults, but both the time of year and the location were unusual. I previously have encountered such families in late May and early June along the trails or in First Field. The offspring I’d seen below the house were probably the result of a late nesting due to the cold, wet spring.

Other good viewpoints from inside our house are the hall and bathroom windows that overlook the veranda ceiling and, incidentally, the veranda-column nests of eastern phoebes, house finches or barn swallows. Usually there are two nests, one on each outer corner column, and sometimes they are occupied from



The Naturalist's Eye

April until August with a constant turnover of families and species.

One summer, in fact, the same nest held first a brood of house finches, then eastern phoebes and finally barn swallows. As far as I could tell, each pair relined the nest with mud before setting up housekeeping, and all three families fledged successfully.

Then one summer our son Mark decided to paint the house. A house finch family had already fledged from the one occupied veranda nest that summer, and eastern phoebes had refurbished the nest for their brood of four. Because the nest was built on a column platform higher than the bathroom window, I had not been able to watch the eggs hatch. But once the nestlings reached the fuzzy stage and craned their heads up above the nest rim, I spent an hour or two watching them each afternoon.

By the time Mark reached the veranda and erected scaffolding to paint the ceiling, the four youngsters were nearly leaping out of the nest whenever a parent arrived with food. But I judged the nestlings to be several days younger than the usual 16 to 17 days it takes phoebes to reach fledgling stage. Yet the parents seemed to be trying to entice them to leave the nest by arriving on the nest rim with insects — pushing the food into the youngsters' open beaks and then pulling out before the nestlings were able to swallow it.

The parents also tantalized their offspring by flying in front of them or onto a nearby veranda post with food hanging from their beaks as if trying to lure them from the nest. For hours at a time the young were not fed, even though they peeped piteously, and yet they refused to fly.

Then Mark moved the scaffolding next to the nest. He discovered, to his horror, that both the nestlings and the nest were swarming with red mites. Unwilling to watch them suffer, he borrowed an idea from Iowa ornithologist Althea Sherman who had once dusted mite-infested young phoebes with rotenone.

After destroying the nest and dusting the youngsters, Mark moved them into a



simulated nest he had fashioned of clean towels and placed on top of the scaffolding. The parents continued to feed the young in their new “nest,” but the weakest nestling died the following morning. The remaining three fledged a day later, three days after we had first watched the parents trying to entice them from the old nest. Apparently they had recognized the threat the red mites presented to their young and had tried to get them out of danger.

“Burning Bed” of Lice

Back in 1886, naturalist writer John Burroughs, in his book *Sians and Seasons*, told how he had watched two phoebe nests in his house eaves in New York state. In the first nest, the nestlings had jumped out prematurely to escape their “burning bed” of lice and were killed. The same parents built a second nest a few yards from the first “. . . but the new nest developed into the same bed of torment that the first did, and the young birds, nearly ready to fly, perished as they sat within it.” So, with Mark’s help, our phoebe family had fared better,

but phoebe losses from mites are apparently not uncommon — especially in re-used nests.

The veranda is also a favorite place for butterflies during the hottest part of the day. They obligingly rest against our veranda window screens, giving me a great opportunity to study their patterns and colors and compare them with the colored plates in my Peterson *Eastern Butterflies* field guide.

Green Comma

That was how I identified the strikingly marked green comma, which is not green at all but orange and black on its upper side, the side most observers usually see. But this green comma presented its underside to me, enabling me to note the small green spots on its hind wings for which it is named.

Wood nymphs, large brown butterflies with yellow-rimmed eye spots on their wings, frequently flutter and beat against the veranda window screens as if they want to come in. On another warm July day, a pair of gray hairstreaks mated on the veranda, attached by their posteriors, giving me a close look at that usually elusive species.

Our front porch, which overlooks the sloping lawn, the spring house and driveway, is another prime wild-life viewing area. After the heat of the day abates, we take our supper

trays there to eat and watch the birds. I keep my binoculars on the table because the large black locust trees in our yard are popular feeding and nesting spots for common yellowthroats, scarlet tanagers, ovenbirds, northern orioles, red-eyed vireos, and other songbirds. If I am wearing my red tank top, ruby-throated hummingbirds are enticed onto the porch for a closer look.

But one evening, as we ate our dinner, we heard an unfamiliar bird call off in the woods. Suddenly, two Cooper's hawks flew out from the trees and down the road. Several minutes later, they returned, landed in a treetop along the flat area, and then dove down out of sight into the woods.

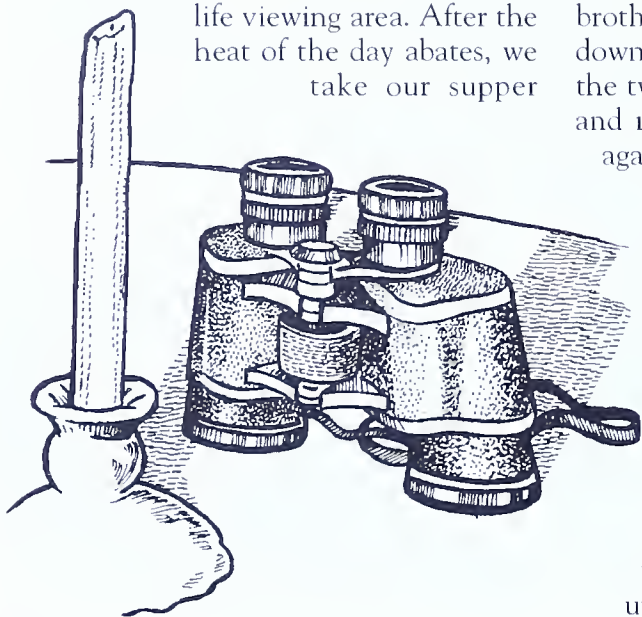
Then there are the white-tailed deer. Even though we are eating and talking, the deer go about their appointed rounds — filing up from the hollow to play in the flat area below or graze on the lawn.

But the summer we were negligent about cutting the grass, one doe decided that the tall grasses were a good place to leave her twin fawns for the day. While working in my study one afternoon, I heard a low-pitched bray and looked out to see a doe walking slowly along the flat area. Then two fawns leaped up from their cover in the grasses, ran toward her and nursed as I watched.

Less than two weeks later, as we sat eating dinner on the front porch with my brother and his wife, that same doe walked down the driveway and called softly. Again the twin fawns jumped out from the grass and nursed while all four of us crowded against the porch railing to watch.

Our suburban visitors were incredulous at the deer's boldness. We were also surprised because usually the deer remain hidden when we have guests, so visitors tend to doubt our deer stories. This time we were more than vindicated by the doe's nonchalant attitude toward her audience.

From the front porch we also watch chasing cottontail rabbits, weed-eating woodchucks that live under the porch and, as dusk ap-



The second one I discovered several nights later when I again heard a flapping from the stove. That chimney swift was still immaculate, and I had a long look at its

So, despite the dog days of July, the natural world continues on its appointed rounds, while I watch them in the relative comfort of my house and porches — cool, unruffled and, best of all, bug-free.

Fun With Woodies

Using the boldface words below, complete the following sentences.

The wood duck is one of nature's most $\frac{\quad}{9}$ ducks found around $\frac{\quad}{3}$ $\frac{\quad}{1}$

They are $\frac{\quad}{2} - \frac{\quad}{6}$ ducks feeding on or near the water's surface.

Woodies are excellent $\frac{\quad}{4}$ and $\frac{\quad}{10}$.

Courtship starts in mid-September, with breeding occurring in 8 .

The hen chooses a tree $\frac{\quad}{11}$ for nesting.

The male eventually leaves his mate, joins other males and _____.

In order to survive, the ducklings must $\frac{\quad}{5}$ from their nests.

molts, jump, swimmers, spring, colorful, dabbling, cavity, fliers and wetlands

Using the numbers above, copy the corresponding letters in the spaces below to uncover what government act helped save the wood duck and other wildlife species.

----- Act.

8 4 11 11 5 1 6 9 7 2 3 9 11 10 7 6

answers on p. 64



CAN YOU estimate how far away this buck is, or at least be close enough to make a good shot? Range estimation is vitally important to archers. On the target line it can spell the difference between first place or not, and in the field it can spell the difference between a clean kill and a complete miss.

Reckoning the Range

By Keith C. Schuyler

MAYBE SOMEDAY a bowman will launch an arrow in the weightlessness of space, but until that time, earth-bound archers will have to contend with gravity. In a zero gravity environment, all aiming would be point blank — there would be no arrow drop. Because we're not so lucky, one of the most important and difficult aspects a bowman must master is range estimation.

Archers have to take into account how much effect gravity will have on the arrow between the point of release and the target, even though we don't usually think of it that way. We're concerned with the trajectory required to hit the target, which in the

case of an arrow is quite pronounced even at short distances.

In the September 1986 column "Bows and Ballistics" I compared a .30-30 rifle shooting a 170-grain bullet at a muzzle velocity of 2,200 fps (relatively slow by firearm standards) with a 60-pound compound bow shooting a 540-grain arrow at an initial velocity of 200 fps. The rifle



A RANGE FINDER can be extremely helpful, but to use one properly an archer should practice with it and check its calibration with measured distances at ranges likely to be encountered in the field.

bullet drops 1½ inches at 50 yards; the arrow drops 9½ feet.

Trying to calculate where to hold a bow to hit a target between five and 50 yards requires some thought. When you consider arrow weight, bow weight, arrow head type, fletching, air drag, number of string strands, effects of any string attachments, atmospheric pressure and countless other variables, the task gets even more complicated.

In shooting without sights, the archer depends upon a computer known as a brain, coupled with visual reference, to figure the angle necessary to drop the arrow into the target. Sights somewhat lessen the human error elements of the aiming process, but none of this addresses one very important element: How far away is the target?

This is a problem only for those who shoot at unknown distances, as on unmarked field courses or in hunting situations. Because most of us do shoot at marked distances from time to time, it would seem that we should be able to determine distances with reasonable accuracy. Unfortunately, this just isn't so.

There are those with awards to prove they can hit targets at known distances with almost monotonous regularity. Yet these same archers often fail in the field. An outstanding example was a champion Olympic archer who missed six deer with the bow before he dropped one.

It is true that the proliferation of three-dimensional animal targets on field course contests in recent years has proven that many archers can do well at unknown distances. Some fantastic scores have been recorded by those who shoot heavy bows and light arrows. The high velocity and resulting flat trajectory make it possible to hit the scoring areas with minimum sighting changes up to 50 yards.

But bowhunters — in big game hunting, at least — must be able to hit their targets with broadheads and typically



heavier arrow shafts. The trajectories are much more pronounced, making the ability to judge distance under random field conditions the ultimate challenge to bowhunters.

It has been found through testing that even experienced bowhunters' range estimates were considerably off the mark on single guesses at targets placed at unknown distances where there were no familiar settings. The ability to judge distances varies among people — some are better at it than others.

Best at Range Estimation

One of the worst shots I know is also one of the best at range estimation. His job requires that he reckon footage to cut lengths of wire and cable. One day, during a lull in hunting, members of a sizable group took individual guesses at a marked but unknown distance (27 yards). Most of the guesses were not even close to the mark. The electrician, however, was right on.

Although no one can consistently judge distances exactly under field conditions, the previous example would seem to indicate that we can improve through practice. Shooting courses with unmarked distances can help, but the shooter never knows for

certain whether he made a good estimate or a lucky shot.

The best way to test, and improve, your ability to estimate distances is by judging and then measuring a variety of distances. This should be done with a long tape measure and, if possible, a companion to help measure distances properly. That way both bowhunters benefit from the practice.

Don't Be Fooled

Simulated hunting setups can be made in any direction and up and down medium to steep grades. Although you will be limited by the length of the tape and sagging in the middle, "shots" across ditches or small streams might be measured. We can be fooled into equating distance to terrain, but a shot over a deep depression must be measured on a level plane through the air.

Similarly, you can use a field course with known target distances. Simply take a position at an unknown distance off the path to where you have a clear shot at the target. Then take a shot before measuring the distance.

Of course, before attempting the latter approach, be sure that you will not be interfering with other shooters and that there are no other archers about. It is best

to pick a time when no formal activities are taking place.

One thing is certain. You'll be in for some surprises.

In hunting situations, time for shots is usually quite limited. The quarry often appears from unexpected quarters and is usually on the move, too. Add to this the excitement factor and the need to keep from being detected. No matter how much we try to simulate the real thing, no two situations will be exactly alike. Most of us have memorable misses to prove the point.

What can we do to increase the odds in our favor?

I can't suggest much to still-hunters, other than what I've already said. When you are on the move, however slowly, and with frequent stops, you must depend entirely upon your ability to judge distance. And you must be conscious of elevation differences that will affect the shot.

One turkey shotgunner I know practices range estimation any time he's hiking. He picks out an object ahead, guesses how far it is, then counts his paces. While this method is not nearly as accurate as using a tape measure, he says that with practice and repetition it gives him a good feel for distances in the woods.

When hunting from a stand — whether an elevated platform or the ground — the contest changes in your favor. You can step off distances or measure them by tape to the nearest likely spots at which game will appear. Don't overdo it or you may have trouble remembering the yardage for each selection. Mark a tree or bush with a tiny bit of biodegradable toilet or facial tissue. Make it small enough that it will be meaningless to game and other hunters. A chalk mark will serve the same purpose where practical.

There are two drawbacks to this method. First, you must remember the distance to



TO PRACTICE range estimation, Schuyler proposes a form of competition, either informally among friends or on a more formal basis as a club activity. Participants walk through a course and guess the distances to a series of stakes.



MEASUREMENTS in Schuyler's game are taken to the exact foot. The player with the lowest score — the one who came closest over the course — wins. After giving this a try, drop Schuyler a note, care of *Game News*.

before an animal appears within bow range. Archers may find that a range finder can be useful for hunting turkeys as well as deer.

Although it requires a bit of work, your club can hold a contest for the purpose of estimating unknown distances. Perhaps 10 or so targets can be set up with the distance between each shooting station and target measured to the exact foot. A numbered cardboard picnic plate, or an 8x10-inch piece of white cardboard as the "target," and a "shooting" stake with matching number is needed for each.

The markers can be set at distances out to perhaps 40 yards from the stakes. Each contestant should be permitted only one guess for each target, with one foot against but not past the stake. A time limit of perhaps 15 seconds keeps things moving and closely simulates the usual time that a deer is available to the archer for a proper shot.

Kept Secret

Scorekeepers or witnesses should accompany the contestant to record each estimate. The list of actual distances should be kept secret until the game is over. Compare the guesses with the real distances, and add the differences (both over and under) to determine the winner. Low score wins. Awards can be paid from the entrance fee. Your club can make some money, and members might learn a lot. (I would appreciate knowing the complete results if anyone tries this activity. Write me in care of *Game News*.)

However you do it, get good at reckoning the range. It's an important element to making clean kills, the goal of every bowhunter.

the marks. If you get confused at the important moment and shoot for the wrong yardage, you are worse off than if you simply trusted your distance judging ability. Second, the mere act of setting up the markers will spread your scent over the area in which you hope deer will show. It is best to make such preparations well ahead of time.

Another way to measure distance is with a range finder. One of the most practical is Ranging's new Sure Shot 60. Designed to measure distances between 10½ and 60 yards, this compact optical device operates on a split-image focus principle similar to that found on many cameras.

By first marking a spot with the naked eye, the user finds the edge of a nearby tree or other upright object such as a sapling or weed as a mark. The distance is then found by focusing the range finder until the vertical line of the chosen object is aligned. A dial in the view finder will show the distance.

Because movement must be kept to a minimum while hunting, a range finder should be used to check various ranges

Home Style Bullets

By Don Lewis

Photos by Helen Lewis

THE FIRST SHOT was smack in the white one-inch square. I smiled inwardly when the second shot printed about a quarter-inch to the left. Having loaded only four shells for this particular test, I was hoping the last two would make the group nothing more than a jagged hole.

Things didn't work out that way, though. For some reason, the third and fourth shots printed high on the target but were touching each other.

Through the spotting scope, I judged the 4-shot group to be around an inch. I wasn't far wrong; a later measurement came out to a bit over 3/4-inch between the two widest holes. It wasn't an impressive group from a top-shooting rifle at 100 yards, but I felt my first try at making homemade bullets was hardly a failure.

Hunter's Requirements

I assembled 10 more cartridges and cut a 5/8-inch group with the first five. The second five spread to the inch mark, but a flyer could have been my fault. I certainly wasn't turning out benchrest bullets, but I was producing bullets that would meet the most demanding chuck hunter's requirements.

Over the years I've written this column, I have stressed the fact that handloading is more than just putting a primer, powder and bullet into an empty case. Home reloading has a variety of avenues, from casting and case forming to making jacketed bullets. I'm sure a lot of handloaders haven't given much thought to making their own bullets.

And considering the fact that superb factory bullets are available at reasonable prices, I might be hard pressed to give a convincing argument why a handloader

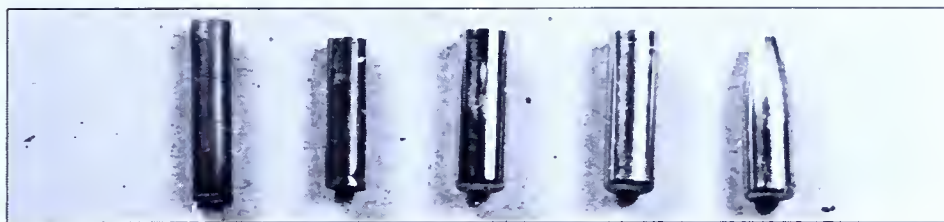


WHILE MAKING bullets from scratch may not appeal or seem worthwhile for many shooters, just like with handloading there's a great deal of satisfaction to be gained from making your own bullets.

should make his or her own bullets. With the odds pretty much against me, I still stick to the argument that shooting and hunting become more satisfying and handloading more exciting when using your own bullets.

I don't proclaim to be an expert in bullet making, but I'm not exactly a stranger to it. Over the years I've watched several top bullet makers crank out benchrest bullets, and I have also delved into bullet making several times.

During the late 1950s, a partner and I decided to embark on a bullet making venture. At the time, most of the money in my custom reloading operation was going



INGREDIENTS necessary to make a 76-grain 6mm bullet are, left to right, 58-grain rough cut core, swaged 54-grain core, 6mm jacket, and cores seated in jacket, resulting in a 76-grain bullet.

to components, especially 50-grain .224 bullets. I was assured the new bullet making project would provide all the 50-grain .224 bullets I could shoot or sell.

The dies we'd ordered failed to arrive, but we got a shipment of 50-grain .224 bullets for testing. However, when I called my partner I was shocked to find his range tests had produced groups running out to more than three inches. The diemaker said he knew what the problem was and would send a second shipment in a few days.

Unfortunately, the second shipment produced results worse than the first. The diemaker blamed the bad results on poor shooting. I'm still not sure what happened, but I believe the machinist was unable to make suitably precise dies. As far as I'm concerned, bullet making requires expensive custom dies and a good bit of technical knowledge. Regardless, our bullet making venture died quicker than a .222 Rem. burns powder.

My next foray into bullet making came when just by chance I met a chuck hunter who said he was making good hunting bullets with an inexpensive die set. I contacted Corbin Manufacturing and Supply Inc. for the necessary dies.

From Dave Corbin I obtained a set of .224 bullet making dies, a supply of .224 jackets, and the die set to make jackets

from .22 Long Rifle cases. All the dies were designed to be used in a conventional reloading press. Using press type dies saves money, but I've learned that using Corbin's Silver Bullet Making press has some distinct advantages.

I had no expectations of making bullets up to benchrest quality. I didn't know enough about assembling a bullet's components to turn out match-grade bullets. It took a lot of trial and error before I began to produce bullets made with .22 rimfire cases that showed much promise.

Unexplained Flyers

The bullets turned in some very nice groups, but I was plagued with unexplained flyers. A few 5-shot groups fell below one inch, but the average was closer to 1 1/4. However, when using Corbin .224 jackets instead of the ones I made from .22 rimfire cases, I could get fair groups and no flyers.

Due to a heavy work schedule, I put bullet making on a back burner for quite a few years. But several months ago I received a batch of 60-grain .224 bullets made in rimfire long rifle cases from MHG (8815 Prather Rd. SW, Centralia, WA 98531) and they rekindled my interest in bullet making. First, I had to find out what the MHG bullets would do on the range.

Tom Pinnock, owner of MHG, claimed his bullets "would perform as good as or better than standard industry offerings." If not, MHG will refund your money and shipping costs. Pinnock strongly believes that jackets made from cartridge brass are less damaging to the bore because of a higher content of zinc, which reduces cop-



per fouling. Commercial jackets are about 90 to 95 percent copper and the rest is zinc. Cartridge brass has about 30 percent zinc.

MHG bullets are not made on automated equipment, which technically qualifies them to be called homemade. Pinnock says his method is slower but provides satisfaction for MHG and its customers, and encourages folks to do more shooting.

My range tests are still in the early stages, but I'm shooting groups from 5/8 to 7/8 inches with a heavy barrel Model 1500 Smith & Wesson .223, and I expect slightly better results from my Remington 40XB-BR .222. So far, I have not had any serious fliers.

My other bullet project involved the 6mmBR varmint rifle I described a few issues ago. The Cook 65-grain benchrest

bullets performed flawlessly, giving me one-hole 3-shot groups on the range. With the bullet making fever sweeping over me, I wrote to Dave Corbin for some help in making my own 6mm bullets.

Dave sent a Silver Press designed specifically for bullet making, the necessary 6mm bullet making dies, a supply of 6mm Corbin jackets, a core swaging die and an adjustable four-core mold for making lead cores. He included a 6mm jacket maker to make 6mm jackets from .22 Mag. rimfire cases.

Without getting too involved in the details, bullet making consists of cutting or pouring lead cores, swaging them to the correct diameter and weight and then seating them in the jackets. The final step is point forming.

Corbin's 6mm jackets weigh roughly 21 grains. I wanted a 76-grain bullet, which meant I had to add 55 grains of lead. To do this, the rough cut or poured cores must be two or three grains heavier to account for lead lost when swaged to the proper diameter and weight. The finished core is also free of air pockets and other irregularities.

It's imperative for the rough cores to slide easily into the jackets. I cut 58-grain cores from 3/15 (.1875) lead wire, lightly lubed them and swaged them to 55 grains. Before seating, cores must be washed in hot soapy water and dried.

Core seating is an important step. Seating the core upsets the lead and fills out the jacket. It also expands the diameter of the jacket. At the same time, it removes any air pockets between the lead and jacket. Trapped air pockets can destroy accuracy.

The final operation is point forming. This is the most critical step in the entire bullet



JOHN NOVAK, above, of Ford City cuts rough cores from lead wire coming down from spool attached to ceiling. Below, the rough 58-grain core is swaged to 54 grains. Note the bleed off of excess lead.



making process, and there are so many variations in point forming, it's next to impossible to describe them. I suggest following the die manufacturer's manual exactly. Corbin's *Handbook of Bullet Swaging* thoroughly explains how the point forming die works.

In making the 76-grain bullet, 55 grains of lead filled the jacket to within 1/8 inch of the top. As I explained, during the core seating process the jacket is expanded from .242 to .2425, or close to the finished diameter of the bullet. The point forming operation expanded the finished bullet to .243.

Bullet making might sound like a lot of work and headaches, and there may be some truth to that. But nearly all mistakes are caused by not understanding how each die works. That's why I strongly recommend studying the manual completely before starting the process and then referring to it as you go along.

I have touched on only the high points here. I referred to Corbin's manual many

times while doing each operation. It's still pretty much a trial and error procedure, but the end results justify all the work and frustrations.

Looked the Same

After applying a generous amount of Corbin lube to a jacket with a seated core, I shoved it into the point forming die. I wanted a bullet with a lead tip, but I had an open nose. Several adjustments on the point forming die brought the desired results. To my inexperienced eye, the 76-grain spire points looked the same as factory jobs, but I knew range tests would tell the final story.

My early results I mentioned at the beginning of this column are satisfactory, but it will take more experience before I consistently get uniform, balanced bullets. To me, it's all part of the learning game, and I have the patience. If you want to add a new challenge to your reloading, try bullet making. It's bound to make you a better shooter.

Books in Brief . . .

(Order from the publisher, not from the Game Commission)

Birds, Bats, Butterflies . . . and Other Backyard Beasts, by Scott Shalaway, Saddle Ridge Press, P.O. Box 21, Cameron, WV 26033, 188pp., \$15, delivered. As a widely read newspaper columnist, with many magazine articles and some books to his credit, too, the author has received literally thousands of questions about wild animals and nature over the years. Presented here are what he calls the answers to the most frequently asked of those questions. Not at all in a question-and-answer format, though, the book is arranged in three parts, with each part further broken down by chapters. Bird feeding, establishing backyard cover, building and erecting nest boxes, and many biological aspects about birds are covered. Other animals and plants are covered in the second section; the third is a compilation of fact sheets on more than 75 animals. A good reference for anybody interested about the birds and other animals around their home.

An Hour Before Dawn, by Dennis Anderson, Voyager Press, 123 North Second St., Stillwater, MN 55082-5002, 221 pp., \$14.95, delivered. The author has been the outdoor editor and columnist for the St. Paul *Pioneer Press*, and compiled here are the best of his columns from the past 10 years. Included is "Empty Skies: America's Duck in Crisis," for which he was nominated for a Pulitzer Prize, and for which a fund raising effort was launched that led to the purchase of a \$650,000 helicopter which is still being used to patrol Louisiana for waterfowl poachers. Not "hook and bullet" type stories, presented here is good coverage of many conservation and environmental issues by a good newspaper columnist.

In the wind

j. scott rupp



A 1992 New Jersey survey showed its residents have developed a more positive attitude toward deer hunting — a 65 percent approval rating compared to the 49 to 55 percent found in previous polls. The United Conservation Alliance quotes a wildlife biology professor as attributing the attitude change to an awareness of Lyme disease, a perception of white-tailed deer as pests, and “an accumulating record of competently managed hunts . . .”

The Zimbabwe government announced its plans to cull nearly 5,000 elephants from its 80,000-animal herd. American Hunter reports that while the country does allow sport hunting, not enough animals are taken. Elephants are beginning to stress the ecosystems of national parks to the point that the animals will begin to suffer if their numbers aren't reduced.

Delaware wildlife personnel are beginning a bobwhite quail restoration project in response to growing concern over the bird's population decline. According to *Outdoor Life*, the state plans to bring in quail management experts from across the country to work on its project. The effort will also benefit other species; there is evidence that the reasons for the quail's decline are also responsible for drops in various songbird species.

The Izaak Walton League has begun to study how population growth and consumer consumption affect both humans and wildlife. Its Carrying Capacity Project is designed to educate outdoorspeople about the relationships between human overpopulation, consumer behavior and environmental issues. The three-year project will survey people to determine their attitudes, and it will develop materials intended to move carrying capacity issues to the forefront of environmental discussions.

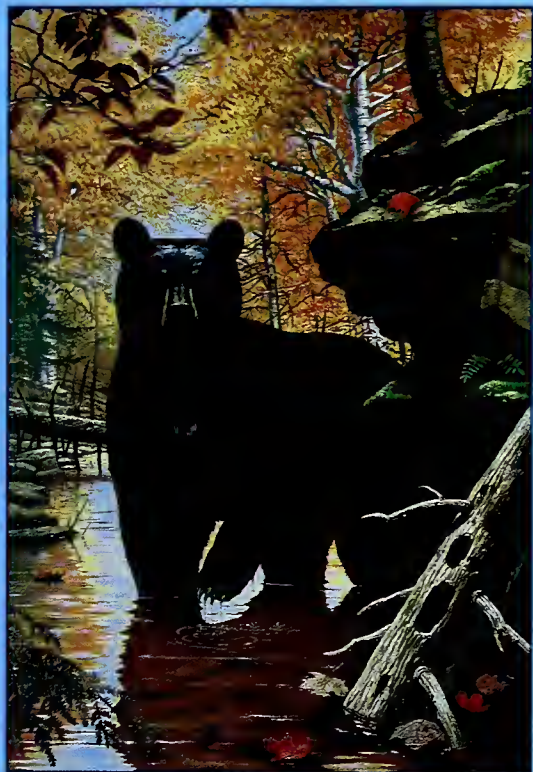
Venezuela's ministry of the environment has developed the first duck stamp program of its kind in South America. A painting of Orinoco geese was chosen as the “first of country” print and stamp, which should be available here this fall. Like the U.S. program, sale of the stamp art will benefit waterfowl and other wildlife.

Canine distemper is causing a major die-off of raccoons in Missouri. The disease targets young raccoons and females, which are stressed from bearing and nursing young. A furbearer biologist says low fur prices and a lack of trapping and hunting has allowed the coon population to swell — setting the stage for the die-off.

The California spotted owl — not a threatened species like its northern cousin — has caused changes in U.S. Forest Service timber practices in the Sierra Nevada Mountains. About 2,000 pairs of the owls are scattered across some 10 national forests. According to the Wildlife Management Institute, the Service's interim guidelines prohibit cutting trees more than 30 inches in diameter in the owl's range.

Answers: colorful, wetlands, dabbling, fliers, swimmers, spring, cavity, molts and jump. The Pittman-Robertson Act.

Working Together for Wildlife



- ◆ “Bear Run” by Bob Sopchick is the 11th limited edition fine art print for the Working Together for Wildlife program.

As with previous editions, “Bear Run” is limited to 600 signed and numbered prints on acid-free, 100 percent rag paper. Image size is about 15x22½ inches. The prints are \$125, delivered; framed prints cost \$97.50 more.

- ◆ Proceeds from WTFW sales benefit Pennsylvania’s nongame management and research projects. So far, the program has raised more than \$1 million and has helped bring eagles, ospreys, otters and other species back to our landscape.

- ◆ Limited numbers of past prints are still available: kestrel ('86), elk ('87), egret ('88), white-tailed deer ('89), bald eagle ('90), and ruffed grouse ('92).

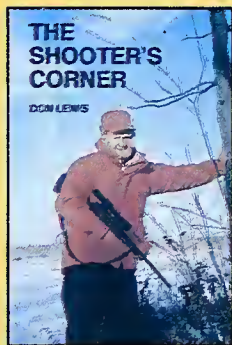
- ◆ Don't forget to order a 1993 WTFW patch for only \$3. Last year's ruffed grouse patch sold out, so don't wait too long. Some patches from past years are still available, though. Ask for a complete list of sale items when placing your order.



- ◆ Order from the Pennsylvania Game Commission, Dept. MS, 2001 Elmerton Ave., Harrisburg, PA 17110-9797.



Books

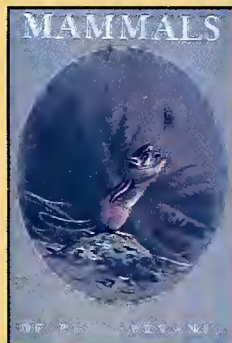


The Shooter's Corner by Don Lewis is a 449-page hardcover detailing nearly every facet of the shooting sports.
Price: \$15

Pennsylvania Big Game Records, 1965-1986, lists the state's official trophy deer and bear records, along with many stories of exciting hunts.
Price: \$10



Birds of Pennsylvania, a 214-page hardcover by James and Lillian Wakeley, highlights birds most commonly found here, plus information on their biology and behavior.
Price: \$10

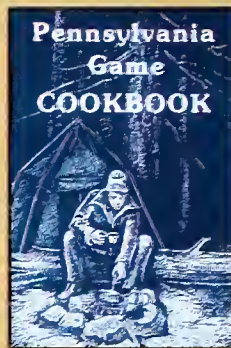


Mammals of Pennsylvania by J. Kenneth Doucet et al profiles the state's mammals — from voles and shrews to bear and deer — along with their roles in state history.
Price: \$4



Gone for the Day is a compilation of Game News columns written and illustrated by famed wildlife artist and naturalist, the late Ned Smith.
Price: \$4

Pennsylvania Game Cookbook is a collection of nearly 200 recipes for cooking popular, and not so popular, game animals.
Price: \$4



All prices include tax, handling and postage. Make check or money order (no cash, please) payable to Pennsylvania Game Commission, Dept. MS, 2001 Elmerton Ave., Harrisburg, PA 17110-9797. Be sure to ask for a complete list of the agency's paid and free publications.

PENNSYLVANIA GAME NEWS

AUGUST 1993

ONE DOLLAR



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COVER PAINTING BY MARIE GIRIO BRUMMETT
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PENNSYLVANIA GAME NEWS (ISSN 0031-451X) is published monthly for \$9 per year, \$25.50 for three years, or membership in Pennsylvania's Cooperative Farm-Game Project or Safety Zone Project; to Canada and all other foreign countries, \$10 U.S. currency, per year. Published by the Pennsylvania Game Commission, Harrisburg, PA. Phone (717) 787-4250. Second-class postage paid at Harrisburg, Pa. CHANGE OF ADDRESS: POSTMASTER: Send both old and new addresses to Pennsylvania Game News, 2001 Elmerton Ave., Harrisburg, PA 17110-9797. Allow six weeks for processing. Material accepted is subject to our requirements for editing and revising. Author payment covers all rights and title to accepted material, including manuscripts, photographs, drawings and illustrations. No information contained in this magazine may be used for advertising or commercial purposes. Opinions expressed here do not necessarily reflect those of the Pennsylvania Game Commission. Copyright © 1993 by the Pennsylvania Game Commission, an Equal Opportunity Employer, the programs of which are all administered consistent with the goals and objectives of Affirmative Action. All rights reserved.

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Editorial

Classrooms & Greenways

TWO MAJOR PIECES of environmental legislation were passed this summer that will go a long way towards protecting and enhancing outdoor Pennsylvania. First, in late June, Lt. Gov. Mark S. Singel — acting on behalf of Gov. Casey — signed Senate Bill 181, which will annually provide up to \$400,000 in grants for environmental education. Appropriately enough, the money will come from fines the state Department of Environmental Resources (DER) collects for pollution and other environmental related violations.

The grants will be administered by the state Department of Education. They will be used primarily to help public and private schools develop and improve their environmental education programs. Grants may also be awarded to other educational and conservation organizations, county conservation districts and the Bureau of State Parks. A 13-member Advisory Council on Environmental Education will be created to advise the Department of Education and DER on the direction and development of environmental education here.

Just like mathematics, science, language arts and other core subjects, environmental education has been a required subject at every grade level for many years in Pennsylvania. With Senate Bill 181, a reliable source of state funding now exists to help school districts better plan for and present these subjects to their students.

The second bill, signed in early July, was House Bill 52, known as "Key 93." It will provide funding for land acquisition, park development and, among other things, maintenance of historical sites. Beginning July 1, 1995, 15 percent of the state's share of realty transfer taxes, around \$30 million a year, will be used to fund this program. The bill also created a \$50 million bond issue, a voter referendum that will be on the ballot this November, to get this program up and running within the next year.

The state Department of Community Affairs, which administers recreation grant programs for local municipalities, is expected to receive \$19.5 million from the bond issue — assuming it passes — and \$10.4 million a year through the tax, about three times what it has been receiving. The acquisition and improvement of county and local parks, nature centers, wild areas and greenways are just a few of the kinds of projects that will be supported through this program. DER is slated to receive \$17 million from the bond issue and \$9 million a year from the realty tax, for use on state parks and forests. The Game Commission is scheduled to receive \$1.5 million from the bond issue. Inexplicably and most surprisingly, however, right before the bill was passed, the Game Commission — and the Fish & Boat Commission — was excluded from receiving any money obtained from the realty taxes.

Regardless, environmental threats will certainly increase in coming years, and these two laws address the two fundamental issues that will ultimately determine the environmental quality future generations will enjoy. By encouraging the preservation of open space now, especially in and around urban and suburban centers while it still exists, and working to instill an environmental appreciation at all schools and at every grade level, future generations will have open space to enjoy and — we hope — an appreciation for it. — *Bob Mitchell*

Letters

Editor:

In "Bowhunting for Woodchucks," in the June issue, I feel the importance of arrow recovery should have been more strongly emphasized.

As a bowhunter for more than 30 years, I know how easily an arrow can become buried under the sod or be deflected. I also can appreciate how damaging arrows can be to livestock when they end up in hay bales.

Archers must be especially careful when hunting woodchucks — as opposed to deer — because they're deliberately hunting agricultural fields. While a rifleman hunting woodchucks can be a farmer's best friend, the careless archer can be his worst enemy.

C.A. MOZELESKI,
CLARKS SUMMIT

Editor:

I just finished reading "Turnpike Trophies" in your June issue and, like the author, I also hunt these hotspots along major highways in Allegheny County.

I've taken a 10-point with a shotgun and an 11-point with a bow, both along busy highways. That story sure hit home with the type of hunting I do.

T. TERPACK,
PITTSBURGH

Editor:

Following your "Don't Forget" reminder about when to buy antlerless deer licenses was as confusing as trying to buy a hunting license in Pennsylvania.

In these days of high tech, it seems the Game Commission should get back to the basics of common sense. In my opinion, some of the rule changes that need immediate attention are Sunday hunting and opening buck season on a Saturday — think of all the money that would be saved by employers and employees.

E. WILTROUT,
SCENERY HILL

Surveys of deer hunters indicate the majority wants to maintain the traditional Monday opener. Sunday hunting is prohibited by state law, and any change would require legislative action.

Editor:

There's a slight error in the "Woodcutter's Rack" design featured in the June issue. The overall length of the rack should be 76 inches, not the 72 as shown. It's a good idea, though. I'm building one for my camp.

J. WILCOX,
CANTON

Editor:

In the June "Field Notes," WCO Steve Kleiner recommends two recent articles about the future of hunting. I must find and read both. Perhaps you might excerpt the articles in an editorial or feature.

I would also recommend "Meditations on Hunting," by the renowned philosopher Jose Ortega y Gasset. A

friend of mine, a retired professor of humanities, was an anti-hunter until he read Ortega's book. Now he appreciates the fact that the pleasure in hunting is not in the kill.

This October, when I return to my camp near Cross Fork, will mark my 44th consecutive year in "God's Country."

J. MEYERS,
RIVIERA BEACH, FL

Editor:

This past spring gobbler season, I was switching back and forth from fluorescent orange to camo hats so many times that I was reminded of Harry "The Hat" Walker, a baseball pitcher so named because he took his hat off many times between pitches.

I fully agree with the safety regulation, though, and enjoy the good reading in *Game News* too.

H. FITZGERALD,
OAKS

Editor:

I've been reading *Game News* for many years, and I always look forward to Don Lewis' gun column. With regard to a letter that appeared in June, I too would like to see more how-to articles about reading a compass, field-dressing game, building temporary shelters, etc. I really enjoyed the woodcutter's rack by Don Anderson in the June issue.

R. RODGERS,
WEST ALEXANDER

Your comments are welcome. Mail them to "Letters," 2001 Elmerton Ave., Harrisburg, PA 17110-9797. Letters will be edited for brevity and clarity.

Deer, Friends and Videotape

By Mike Sajna

GARBAGE. Unlike Andie McDowell in the movie *Sex, Lies and Videotape*, Rick was not thinking about garbage that day and how we are drowning in it. Nor was he contemplating the overpopulation that is creating all the garbage.

Instead, he was smiling to himself, picturing the expressions on the faces of his friends when he showed them the tape. He was tired of them never believing him. All the jokes about his eyesight and imagination would end once he got on videotape a couple of the bucks he had been seeing.

So that afternoon, with his bow tucked under one arm and his camcorder and tripod slung over the other, he set off to spring the trap that would shut up his friends forever. Once he returned in the evening, there would be no more, "Yeah, yeah. Sure, sure. What were you drinking?"

Hoping to get a clear shot, both with the camcorder and his bow, Rick posted next to an overhanging hemlock on the edge of an old tram road. He had seen a lot of deer, including an 8-point, in the area over the past couple days. And the open space of the road seemed a good place to film. Even if a deer stayed out of range for a clean shot with a bow, he thought, he could still get it with the camera.

It wasn't long before Rick's prayers were answered. Almost as soon as he was set up, redemption came in the form of a rut-necked 6-point buck that stepped out of the trees and onto the edge of the road about 40 yards away.

More as a matter of principle than suspicion, the buck scanned the country before him and then, seemingly satisfied that everything was clear, started walking down the road directly toward the camera. Rick, his heart thumping, glanced down at the camera to make sure it was on and pointing in the right direction. Then the auto focus turned the lens and the buck stopped.

Whitetails may possess more curi-



osity than any game animal on earth. Every hunter beyond complete novice has been stared at by a deer trying to figure out exactly what is that strange, oddly shaded lump perched atop that rock.

Frontier hunters often played on the whitetail's curiosity to fill their larders. Philip Tome, the great late 18th and early 19th century hunter of northern Pennsylvania, sometimes used torches hung from trees or carried in canoes to attract and hold deer, much like a spotlight does today. He writes in his book *Pioneer Life or Thirty Years a Hunter*:

"I prepared a torch of pitch pine, sometimes adding lard or bear grease, which I swung upon a pole, and reaching from the scaffold to the ground. The torch was attached to a crane of withes and bark, made to slide upon the pole, and slipped down by a cord to within three feet of the ground. As the deer came along, they would stop and stare at the light, forming an easy mark for me."

Of hunting from a canoe with a torch he writes: "One held the light, another sat in the forward part of the canoe, generally with two guns, and the third one sitting in the stern, would push the canoe along the stream as carefully as possible. Sometimes we could approach so near as to shoot them as they raised their heads to look at the light. Sometimes they would stand still long enough for the hunter to bring down a second one with the other gun."

At least one other 19th century Pennsylvania hunter believed he could use the whitetail's curiosity to charm them. E.N. Woodcock in *Fifty Years a Hunter and Trapper* tells of a hunter he encountered in Potter County during a snowstorm in 1869.

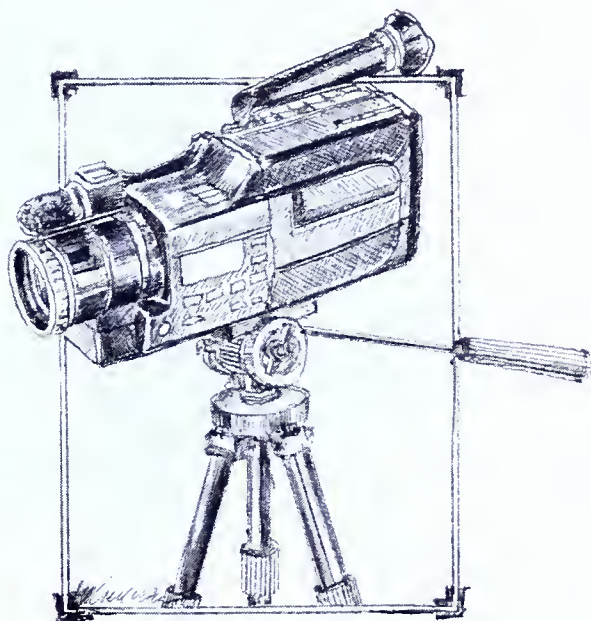
"I had barely stepped into the open when I caught sight of some object jumping from a knoll to a log where it was partly concealed behind some trees, so that I was unable to make out what it was. I was sure that I had never seen anything like it

before, either in the woods or out in civilization. I could get a glimpse of the thing as it would pass between the trees, then it would disappear behind a brush or a large tree for a moment, then I would get a glimpse of it as it would move.

"Sometimes it would appear white and then fire red, I could see that it was coming in my direction. As I always wore steel gray, or what was commonly known as sheep gray clothing, which is nearly the same color of most large timber. I stepped to a large hemlock tree, leaned close against the tree, set my gun down close to my side and stood waiting to see whether the thing was natural or otherwise.

"It was not long before I could see that I had been frightened without real cause, for it was a hunter who had dressed in fantastic array to put a spell on or charm the deer. He had on a long snow-white overshirt and had tied a fire red cloth over his hat and a black sash was tied about his waist. I stood perfectly quiet against the tree until the man was within a few feet of me, I could no longer keep from laughing, and I burst out with laughter.

"The man jerked his gun from his shoulder as he turned in the direction in which I was standing and gazed at me for a moment and then said, You frightened me. I replied that I guessed that he was no more



WHILE A CAMERA can prove the truth of a storyteller's tale, it can also document events that paint a person in a less than heroic light.

frightened that I was when I first caught sight of him.

"Well the man explained that he always dressed in that manner when the underbrush was loaded with snow, as the deer would stand and watch him with a curiosity until he was within gun shot."

This time, though, it was not a night-shirt and red bandanna that was fascinating the buck, but the auto focus and red light of the camcorder. The deer's nose twitched and his ears picked up. He hunched his shoulders, raised and lowered his head, and then looked away and quickly back, trying to surprise whatever it was in front of him.

Not daring to move his arms or hands, Rick nudged the camera with his leg to keep it pointing in the right direction. The movement drove the auto focus crazy and set the buck to snorting and pawing the ground.

For what seemed an eternity, the stand-off continued until finally the deer seemed to decide prudence might be the better part of valor and the place where he had been might be better than where he was going. He turned and headed back in the direction from which he had come.

Feeling certain he had the buck on tape, Rick thought about his friends and what

they would say when he popped the tape into the VCR. He was going to take it to Joe's home and Jack's home and up to the club where everybody could see it.

They would, of course, have something to say about him not getting off a shot, but that didn't matter. In the camera was absolute proof he was seeing bucks.

Rick was still smiling at the success of his plan when he glanced into the woods above and saw that the buck's curiosity had not really abated. It had entered the woods only to circle and sneak up from behind on whatever was along the road.

Waiting until the deer disappeared behind a small clump of brush, Rick turned the camera toward the spot and then drew back on his bow. The deer walked out from behind the brush and moved closer. Rick held on him, following his every step through the sparse underbrush, until he needed to take only one more step for a clean shot.

Before the buck took that step, though, Rick looked down at the camera to make sure it was pointing in the right direction. He thought this was going to be better than he had ever imagined and then, wanting to make sure it was all on tape, nudged the camera with his leg, in the process jarring the trigger release of his bow with his chin and sending the arrow whizzing over the buck's back.

For the longest time after the miss the 6-pointer did not move. It only looked around, puzzled by the sudden hiss of air past its ears. Then, keeping just enough brush between it and Rick to deny him a second shot, the buck stepped over, sniffed the place where the arrow had hit and then disappeared into the mountain laurel.

The next day when Rick walked back to the spot to look again for his arrow, he measured the distance and realized he had missed a shot of only about 10 yards. And it was all on tape.

NINETEENTH CENTURY hunters sometimes pursued deer at night with canoes, using pitch pine torches. Deer were attracted to the lights, and they usually stood still long enough for someone in the canoe to shoot.



What's in It for Them?

The Forest Stewardship Program helps landowners get the most out of their forested properties, while at the same time improving living conditions for wildlife.

IF YOU'RE A LANDOWNER or someone interested in land management practices designed to benefit wildlife, you'll want to know about a program designed to help landowners manage their forests. The Pennsylvania Forest Stewardship Program is a timber management strategy based on the premise that forests should be managed as dynamic natural systems and that all forest plants and animals and non-living forest components should be considered.

More specifically, the program is designed to help landowners get the most from their forest land. By becoming a forest steward, the program can help landowners obtain professional management expertise; develop a long-term forest management plan; improve habitat for wildlife; and protect rare and endangered species.

Developing an approved Forest Stewardship Plan qualifies a person to receive cost-share assistance from the Stewardship Incentive Program (SIP) for a number of wildlife habitat enhancement practices. Up to 75 percent of the costs for managing forest land can be offset by SIP monies.

**By Ellen O'Donnell
Margaret Brittingham
Kristi Sullivan**

To manage a forest properly, the landowner must develop a plan, and to do this the owner should first determine his or her objectives. For example, a landowner who is a



JAKE AND BARBARA WEBB, landowners in Huntingdon County, enrolled more than 45 acres of woodland in the stewardship program. Projects such as brushpile building are cost-shared by the program.

hunter or bird watcher may want to manage for one or two particular species. Or the owner may prefer a management plan that benefits a variety of species.

Regardless of a person's objectives, a professional wildlife manager will be able to help develop a long-term management plan. A list of wildlife biologists who assist with developing Forest Stewardship Plans is available from DER Bureau of Forestry offices.

Attracting a variety of wildlife is a matter of providing food, cover, space and water. All the management techniques mentioned in this article are eligible for cost sharing through SIP.

There are essentially two ways to im-

plishment of permanent vegetative cover, which involves planting or seeding perennial vegetation (trees, shrubs, grasses, legumes and other forbs) to improve wildlife food and cover.

Landowners can also place tree shelters around trees and shrubs. This prevents browsing and other damage that can kill food and cover producing vegetation. Sometimes it's advisable to fence an entire area to save it from overbrowsing and other problems. Electric or woven wire fences can be used for a project of this kind.

Herbaceous openings, also known as food plots, are vital habitat components. Landowners can create these on their properties, which will enhance feeding, nesting and brood-rearing areas for grouse, turkey and other wildlife.

Insectivorous songbirds, salamanders, voles and other animals are attracted to areas where insects thrive. By leaving rocks, logs, cavities and downed treetops and other woody materials, habitat will be provided for these small animals which, in turn, serve as food for hawks, owls, snakes, shrews, foxes and other carnivores.

All wild animals require cover to nest, to escape from predators and to find refuge from adverse weather conditions. Wildlife cover can be enhanced by providing evergreen cover, cavities and brushpiles.

Evergreens such as hemlock, white pine and rhododendron are often used by wildlife as cover from harsh weather conditions. Some birds, such as the mourning dove, nest primarily in evergreens.

In addition, evergreen needles are eaten by deer in winter when other food is scarce. A good rule of thumb is to maintain 2 to 5 percent of a woodland property in evergreen cover.

The value of evergreen cover depends upon the species, size and age of the stand, and its proximity to other cover types.



CREATING AND MAINTAINING herbaceous openings will enhance feeding, nesting and brood-rearing areas for turkeys, grouse and other animals. The openings attract insects that are eaten by many birds.

prove food for wildlife: enhancing food sources already present and planting additional native food sources. If enough food already exists to support a chosen species, a hands-off management approach may be the best option.

In general, plants that have fleshy fruits, nuts or seeds are valuable food sources. The wider the variety of plants in an area, the more wildlife it can sustain. For example, because red and white oaks don't necessarily produce acorns every year, having more than one species of oak in a forest increases the likelihood of acorns being produced each year.

One management strategy is the estab-

Evergreens are most effective when located near brushy areas or small herbaceous openings.

For establishing evergreen cover, planting native conifers such as white pine or hemlock is a good idea. Another way to enhance evergreen cover is to remove selectively other trees that are shading the evergreens, which allows them to grow more rapidly.

Tree cavities are used for nesting and escape cover by 35 species of birds and 20 species of mammals in Pennsylvania. Many reptiles and amphibians also use cavities. To meet these needs, a density of five to 10 living and dead cavity trees per acre should be retained.

Preferably, these should be of different sizes and near streams and forest openings, or in proximity to other cover. Large trees with large cavity holes are particularly valuable. Landowners should leave a variety of snags (dead trees) standing on the property.

Building brushpiles is one of the easiest ways to improve cover. Coupled with the cutting of trees and shrubs along the perimeter of a forest stand (forest edge cutting) the construction of brushpiles will increase the diversity of vegetation for wildlife food and cover.

In addition to food and cover, all wild animals require space in which to live. For any individual animal, this space is referred to as a home range, and it must be large enough to provide adequate food, cover and water.

Some species, such as the goshawk, have large home ranges and require large, continuous areas of forest. Other species require unbroken forests because of their limited abilities to travel or disperse.

Area-sensitive songbirds such as the wood thrush are called sensitive because they can't exist in forested habitats broken up by clearcuts and developments. Generally speaking, the interior forest habitat is

safer for these area-sensitive species because it supports fewer predators and experiences less human disturbance.

One way of linking two forested habitats that are isolated from one another is to establish wildlife corridors, which involves planting trees, shrubs, grasses and forbs to link isolated habitats.

Other species, such as the wild turkey, require a mixture of habitat types. A flock of turkeys may spend the spring and summer around forest clearings, where they can feed on grasses, forbs, seeds and insects. In fall, the birds will likely be found in mature forests containing mast-producing trees such as oak and beech, and fruit producers such as dogwood, grape and crabapple.



PRESCRIBED BURNING is often necessary to establish and maintain warm season grasses, which have a high food value for wildlife. Carefully applied, burning can also control understory growth.

During winter they rely on mast and fruits leftover from autumn, and on insects and green plants found in and around spring seeps.

A landowner with small acreage can't expect to provide all the habitat requirements for the wild turkey. But by managing for mature trees and shrubs that produce fruit or nuts, maintaining a forest clearing, and keeping spring seeps intact, he may attract turkeys to his land at any time of the year.

Landowners can also work with their neighbors to provide a mix of habitats that may satisfy all the turkey's needs.

Removing overstory trees can enhance food and cover for animals dependent upon early successional forest stages. And some-

times it's beneficial to control non-native or undesirable vegetation as a way of reducing competition for established vegetation.

Prescribed burning under carefully controlled conditions is necessary to maintain or improve warm-season grasses for wildlife food and cover. Applying soil amendments such as lime and fertilizer to improve grasses, legumes and other forbs is also approved under SIP.

Aside from food and cover, water is a prime element of good wildlife habitat. There are several types of water sources, any or all of which a landowner may find on his property.

Wooded areas adjoining streams and rivers are known as riparian forests. "Ripar-

Game Commission provides money and technical assistance for streambank fencing to farmers enrolled in its cooperative public-access programs.

Forested wetlands are another valuable habitat type. These areas are important nesting habitat for woodcock, red-shouldered hawks and barred owls, for example, as well as for waterfowl. Many mammals also use forested wetlands. Meadow voles and shrews are common in these areas, providing prey for larger mammals, hawks and owls.

Enhancing or restoring these areas may require establishing forest buffers, restoring original hydrology, stabilizing streambanks and establishing permanent vegetative cover.

Spring seeps, where ground water comes to the surface along hillsides and lower slopes, are also important. Because ground water is always well above freezing, seeps often remain ice-free throughout the winter.

Green plants and insect larvae found in and around seeps provide nourishment for wildlife during winter when food is otherwise scarce or unattainable. All mast and fruit-producing trees in the vicinity of seeps should be maintained, and the seep site itself should



FOREST WETLANDS and other water sources are extremely important. They furnish many basic necessities for wildlife, from food and water to nesting and escape cover.

ian" comes from the Latin *ripa*, which means "bank." These areas attract many amphibians, birds and other wildlife. Forest vegetation also protects streambanks from erosion and provides shade that keeps streams cool.

Trees should not be cut within a 50-foot buffer zone along forested streams. If cutting is necessary, a professional forester should be consulted to minimize negative impacts to these fragile and important streamside areas.

In agricultural areas, we recommend farmers use streambank fencing to control livestock access and grazing, and to stabilize streambanks and reduce erosion. The

not be disturbed.

Vernal ponds are small wetlands, often found in clusters, that normally contain water during the winter and spring but are dry during the summer and fall. These ponds may be found in upland forested areas, or they may occur along streams and rivers, receiving a fresh supply of water when water levels rise and then recede.

The breeding cycles of many aquatic invertebrates are adapted to these ponds. Many amphibians, such as spotted salamanders, American toads, wood frogs and spring peepers, court and lay eggs in these ponds, then return to the woods for the rest of the year.

Despite their small size, vernal ponds provide a rich supply of food for many organisms and may support the greatest biomass of vertebrates in the forest. Provided that you meet the regulations outlined by your resource professional, one way to enhance habitat for pond-dependent species is to construct small, seasonally flooded wetlands (vernal pools) on your property.

When managing forests, primary consideration should be given to species and habitats of special concern. Examples of species of special concern in Pennsylvania include the snow trillium, giant swallowtail, eastern mud salamander, green salamander, coal skink, rough green snake, yellow-bellied flycatcher, northern goshawk and northern long-eared bat.

In all, there are 597 plants, 159 vertebrates and 248 invertebrates considered special concern species in Pennsylvania.

Information on specific species or rare habitats that are present or have historically existed in your area is available from the Game Commission and DER's Bureau of Forestry. Existence of species and areas of special concern on your woodlands should be confirmed by a resource professional, and every effort should be made to protect the species and its habitat.

It is possible to establish populations of threatened and endangered species of flora or fauna. Landowners can also modify existing habitats to make them more beneficial to species of special concern.

As the amount of wildlife habitat shrinks due to human development, private landowners can be the key to the health and survival of many species. It's important to keep in mind that wildlife management

involves trade-offs; no one option will benefit *all* wildlife. Before implementing any management activities, a landowner should weigh the positive and negative effects of different management alternatives and consult a professional manager for guidance.

Developing and implementing a long-term forest management plan will provide benefits to both wildlife and people — not only today but for many generations to come.

A more detailed guide to managing for wildlife under the Forest Stewardship Program is in production and should be available soon. If you would like to learn more about the Forest Stewardship Program or



BORDER CUTS and understory thinning are two examples of timber management practices that create habitat variety. Through wise, planned forest strategies, landowners can make their properties more useful for wildlife and more enjoyable for themselves.

the Stewardship Incentive Program, please contact your local Bureau of Forestry service forester, or call the program's toll-free number, (800) 235-WISE.

Ellen O'Donnell is a Pennsylvania Forest Stewardship Program associate; she has been with the program since March 1991. Margaret Brittingham is a professor of wildlife resources at Penn State University, and Kristi Sullivan is a graduate assistant in Penn State's wildlife resources department.

Remembering Grandpa

On what turned out to be their last trip up the mountain together, the Old Man had hoped his grandson would take his first buck. The boy had other ideas.

By Tom Fegely

THE OLD MAN paused at the rim of the hill to catch his breath. Leaning against a tree to rest his weary back and legs, he gazed back to where a few minutes earlier he'd left his grandson, Jeff, in hopes the young hunter would cross paths with his first buck.

It was dark when the two parted company, and now the rim of the far mountain showed a tinge of orange. Enhanced by a shallow layer of Thanksgivingsnow still covering the forest floor, it was a perfect start to the new buck season.

Jeff had offered to relinquish the lower stand to his grandfather, but the Old Man refused, even though he had shot numerous bucks from the stand over the years. The kid had tagged a doe just after his 12th birthday but hadn't fired a shot since. In fact, he hadn't even seen a buck in the woods during the last three seasons in which he'd hunted.

The Old Man lingered a bit longer than he'd wanted to, but age was taking its toll and the previous summer's heart surgery had set him back even more. Though he was reluctant to admit it to anyone else, he knew that this might be his last season in the deer woods. But his wish was to be with Jeff when the kid downed his first buck.

And the Old Man had a plan.

"Maybe today," he muttered as he continued his slow climb to the hilltop. "Yup. Maybe today."

Jeff hadn't wanted his grandfather to climb the 300 or so yards to the "Outpost" — a fat, sprawling oak atop the hill where the Old Man had first taken him when he was old enough to walk. That's what they named it one autumn day nearly a decade earlier.

"The Outpost. I like that," the Old Man had told Jeff. "That's what it will be."

And so it was.

Here they'd sat and watched deer, squirrels, birds and anything else that happened to wander by. It was also the place they visited after Jeff's parents had been killed in an automobile



accident shortly after the kid turned six; a disaster that ripped the soul of the Old Man. He tried to tell the kid about death and other of life's realities. After all, most of the Old Man's buddies were dead or sitting in a nursing home, and he understood the inevitable.

"Nevergonnaput me in there," hesternly warned his wife after a visit with a friend who was confined to a home. "You'd have to tie me up and drag me."

He'd mellowed a bit since then, mainly because of Jeff's presence in the household. The Old Man and his wife had taken the responsibility of caring for the youngster after his parents were killed, ignoring the protests of Jeff's uncle, a New York City accountant who wanted to adopt him.

"You can come out to the farm to see him anytime you want," was the Old Man's answer. "But he sure ain't gonna grow up in the city."

Things worked out well. Jeff was a high school baseball star, president of the student council and well-liked by his friends. At home, the boy was expected to take responsibility around the farm. The reward was that when the chores were done he

could fish and hunt as much as he wanted. The farm had a trout stream and a swamp thick with muskrats and ducks, and ground-hogs and grouse inhabited the couple hundred acres of field and woodlands that came with the property.

The Old Man finally arrived at his post, well after daylight, and settled down against the familiar tree. Fifty yards away a well-beaten deer trail meandered over the rim of a hill, into a clump of hemlocks, through a small stand of pole beech and down the opposite side — directly to the place where he'd posted Jeff.

He had it all worked out, knowing from years of experience that the trail would bring at least one buck onto the hillside before noon. No matter if they were pushed off the far mountain or came up from the swamp and cornfields below, the deer would pass directly in Jeff's sights.

Below the ridge Jeff tensed his shoulders and tucked his neck in the collar of his new orange-camouflage hunting coat. It was cold on the shady side of the hill and he wouldn't get relief from the sunshine for another hour or so. His grandfather had insisted that he not move from the place where he'd cleared a large oval of dried leaves to hide the sounds of foot-shuffling brought on by long stands.

The grandfather had laughed loudly when Jeff brought the coat home. "Orange and camouflage, huh?" he'd exclaimed, holding the garment at arm's length. "So you think a deer's not gonna see you in this beacon."

Like his hunting cronies, the Old Man had cursed the wearing of blaze orange when it was first made law. But several seasons earlier his cousin's son, wearing only an Army coat and brown pants, had been shot. He wasn't hurt bad; only a bit of flesh had been taken from his leg. Another few inches and he could have been killed.

Now the Old Man seemed to accept his orange vest, not that he liked it. But camo-



THE OLD MAN'S rebuilt heart quickened at the sight of the 9-pointer traipsing into the opening. It paused next to a fallen tree to look at and past him.

orange was something else again, and he and Jeff had fun teasing one another about the new coat.

It was nearly eight o'clock when the Old Man saw the first deer. Shots on the far mountain an hour earlier had signaled the beginning of the season, and he knew deer would gradually work their way across the old road, through another valley, across Brewer's Brook and up the hill to where he was sitting.

Now they were here, cautiously working through the thicket in front of the Old Man.

He froze, pressing his back against the oak and moving only his eyes to count the six forms moving single file through the pole timber and across a narrow clearing, the remnant of an old skid trail. The first five deer were definitely does and fawns, but the sixth lingered cautiously, waiting for the others to cross the opening before he rejoined them.

The Old Man's rebuilt heart quickened as the buck, a handsome 9-pointer that he'd seen grazing in the cut corn a few days earlier, traipsed into the opening. It paused next to a fallen tree to look at and past him, then dropped its head and sniffed the trail of the does, which had already moved off the bench and down into the ravine.

The Old Man waited, not blinking an eye, as the buck quietly disappeared over the ridge.

"Should be there soon," he thought after five minutes, glancing at his watch. "Just hope they didn't break off and go into Ben Freeman's swamp."

Ben was a lifelong neighbor, a fellow farmer and hunter. He'd be down in the hollow, sitting on his favorite stump, probably puffing on his pipe, just as he'd done every year for the past 30 or more.

Another 10 minutes passed and the Old Man grew restless.

Jeff was restless, too. He'd seen a pair of does at daybreak; three more a short while later. None of them were spooked as no other hunters were around, and the wind was in the kid's face. They moved slowly, pausing occasionally to nip a bud or scrape

an acorn from the forest floor. He'd thoroughly examined them all but couldn't find as much as a spike on any of them.

The youngster saw the five does moving down the trail toward him long before he realized there was a sixth deer poking cautiously behind. Three of the deer stopped and nudged leaves to pick acorns — one looking up periodically to gaze over its back.

"If one's looking back, you can bet something's following," his grandfather had advised him one afternoon many years before as they sat at The Outpost watching whitetails.

"Never move too early. Sit tight and be patient and it will pay off."

An Edict

Jeff had thought seriously about demanding that his grandfather stay at the lower stand and not go to the top of the hill. He knew how the Old Man had resisted having the heart operation, became cranky and insolent during his recovery period over the summer, and fought his grandmother's edict that he sell the cows. But when his neighbor, Ben, had offered to buy them he cheered up a bit.

"At least they'll stay in the neighborhood," he'd joked, smiling at the prospect of not having to sell his small herd to a stranger.

At least twice a week he took the rusty truck down the dirt road connecting the two farms and helped Ben with the morning milking. It was his way of hanging on to a life he'd loved.

Deer hunting was another way of clinging to his youthfulness, although Jeff knew that the old timer's deer hunting time was nearing an end. The doctor had told the Old Man not to go hunting at all and certainly wouldn't have approved of his walk to the top of the hill — a path he'd followed countless times over the years. But Doc was an old friend as well, and he knew his medical advice would fall on deaf ears.

Jeff's pulse jumped when the buck stepped from a dip that had hidden it. It was

JEFF CLEANED the skull plate, polished the antlers to the very tip of each of the nine tines, and hung it above the fireplace on a plaque he'd made in school.

still about 80 yards away but he could see the antlers — five points on the right and four on the left — clearly through the scope. He counted them twice, knowing that this was the same buck his grandfather had told him about.

Jeff's shoulders began to quiver and he could feel the nervous twitching reaching through his elbows. Stay calm, he thought. This is no time to fall apart.

The kid knew it was too soon to shoot, but he also knew he couldn't let the big buck move any farther down the mountain slope.

He waited another few seconds, finally getting a clear view of the big corn-fed whitetail as it dropped its head to pick an acorn next to a stump. Jeff squinted through the scope, steadied the crosshairs on his target and slowly squeezed the trigger.

The shot shattered the stillness, echoing off the mountains and finally rolling away to the south. It was the sound the Old Man had been waiting to hear.

The woods filled with white flags, three of them breaking off toward Ben Freeman's woods and another trio backtracking to the top of the hill.

Quickly, belying his age and arthritis-stiffened legs, the Old Man stood and hobbled, almost running, to the overlook where he hoped to see his grandson working toward a fallen deer.

He'd not yet reached the vantage point when a motion off to the right caught his eye. Three deer, one the same buck that he'd seen earlier, were coming back up the slope.

"Dang," he said aloud. "He missed it."

Knowing that the frightened deer wouldn't again go back down the hill, the Old Man raised his .30-30, centered the moving deer in his open sights, and fired. The buck dropped in his tracks.

Jeff and the Old Man arrived at the fallen deer about the same time.

"Nice going, Grandpa," the kid shouted.



"Still haven't lost your shooting eye, have you?"

Jeff went on to explain that he'd been too hasty with his shot and it had hit a rotted stump only inches from the buck's nose. He'd seen the bits of wood explode into the air, some actually bouncing off the big buck. Fortunately, it had run back up the hill.

"Well, at least one of us got him," the Old Man muttered matter-of-factly. But Jeff knew his grandfather was proud of taking taking the handsome buck — the second biggest he'd ever killed.

Jeff insisted on field-dressing the deer and dragging it to the bottom of the hill while the Old Man walked on ahead to get the pickup. They'd meet at the head of the swamp for the victory ride back to the farmhouse.

"Maybe you oughta get rid of that scope," his grandfather teased at the supper table that night. "Better yet, give away that funny looking coat. You probably scared the daylights out of that buck."

The next weekend Jeff cleaned the skull plate, polished the antlers to the very tip of each of the nine tines, and hung it above the fireplace on a plaque he'd made in the school shop.

Jeff again went through buck season

without getting a deer but later added to the venison in the freezer with a fat doe. The family ate well that winter, and the memorable hunt was retold many times as the Old Man and the kid sat by the fireplace in the kitchen. Usually the discussion started when either the kid or the Old Man would look up from the table and gaze at the rack on the wall.

The Old Man died the following spring while Jeff was in school. The kid knew what had happened as soon as the teacher told him to take his books and report to the office.

A few weeks earlier the Old Man had again been admitted to the hospital but this time he didn't get better. Jeff stopped by every day and talked about school, hunting and the fat trout he'd seen in the brook. It had comforted the Old Man to know that he'd instilled outdoor values in his grandson and he looked forward to the times Jeff would stop by to talk.

That afternoon Jeff made his way up the hill to The Outpost where the Old Man had spent his final day in the deer woods.

He sat there a long time, alone with his memories about his best friend who was both a father and grandfather to him. He would miss him, sure. But good memories don't die.

As the sun shaded the slope, the kid zipped his jacket and stood. He had one more stop to make before heading home.

Done Its Job

The woods looked much different in spring than it had in the deer season. But he had no trouble finding the shattered stump, the ragged hole in its center still showing where his well-placed shot had done what it was supposed to do.

"There'll be plenty more for me," he whispered to himself. "That one was yours, Grandpa."

A tear traced a path from the corner of the kid's eye as he dug his hands in his pockets, paused for a minute to watch a squirrel renovating its nest in the top of a tall poplar, then slowly worked his way through the woods, along the edge of the swamp, and back to the farmhouse.

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It had been an uneventful archery season, and in the final days it was time for a move — a move that brought one hunter . . .

A Last-Week Blitz

By Michael Kurtz

THE 1990 ARCHERY season was turning out to be most uneventful. Compared to previous years I wasn't seeing many deer. The October weather was unseasonably warm and the bugs were almost unbearable. I had put in for the last week of the season for vacation, though, so I wasn't too concerned with my early lack of success.

The evening of the third Saturday found me in my tree stand, and I heard leaves rustle behind me. I slowly peeked over my left shoulder and saw a small 4-pointer coming directly at me, only 20 yards away. With a blowdown to my left, I figured he'd come to my right, so I slowly lifted my bow from the holder and turned that way.

Although he moved to within five yards, he came in to my left and never gave me a shot. When he started to feed about 10 yards in front of me, however, I still had hope. A small opening gave me a fair shooting lane, so I took the shot. The arrow hit a branch and dropped straight down. The buck, startled, jumped away about 25 yards and looked around. After a few moments he resumed feeding.

Surprisingly, he fed back toward me, and when he got within range I took another shot. This time the arrow hit a few yards on the other side of the buck. The 4-point went over and smelled my arrow, and that was the last I saw of him.

Although my vacation was canceled, I was fortunate enough to be able to come in an hour late Monday through Thursday, and I did get Friday off.

On the Sunday before the final week I scouted the area where I had missed the 4-pointer. That spot didn't seem too promising, so I checked a place where I'd shot a 9-pointer the previous year — even though an earlier trip there had yielded nothing.

As soon as I got there I found three fresh scrapes around a sapling — just like the year before. That was all I needed. I had, I thought, finally found the right place.

Monday morning found me overlooking the scrapes, and about a half-hour after sunrise I saw two deer angling toward me. The first one, a small 6-pointer, came up to one of the scrapes. The other one stayed back, feeding, and I glimpsed a tine on it



that was 10 inches high. I decided to let the 6-pointer go by and take my chances with the second one.

I watched as the 6-pointer freshened the scrape and then slowly moved off. The second buck started to come in to the scrapes. With the bow in hand and my heart racing, I anxiously watched as the buck came into view. It was a 3-pointer. The one side was a spike and the other had a small Y. I still had time left in the season so I let him go, too.

I waited for only 15 minutes before I saw another deer, but I couldn't tell what it was. It walked parallel to the scrapes then came up to 50 yards behind them. Incredibly, I could clearly see the deer's nose testing the air, but I still couldn't make out if it was a buck. After a few moments, the deer moved back and vanished into the woods.

Rain shortened my Tuesday hunt, but Wednesday found me back on stand. Fifteen minutes before I had to leave I spotted two deer about 75 yards away. I could soon see they both were bucks. They slowly drifted to within 40 yards and kept feeding, but they never came any closer. Before long I lost sight of them. I waited another 10 minutes and decided to get down.

I figured for the next day's hunt I'd move my stand 20 yards down and over to the left, toward where I'd last seen the two

bucks. I started looking for a good tree to put my stand in, but before I'd taken even 10 steps the two bucks jumped up less than 30 yards away and took off. They had been bedded down and I hadn't even seen them.

The next morning I had no problem finding the tree I'd selected the day before. I was in my stand about a half-hour after light when a buck came into view. He went to the scrapes and freshened all three. If I would have stayed in the tree I had been in the previous mornings, I would've had an 8-yard shot.

The buck started feeding, moving to the base of my old tree about 20 yards away. I was hoping he'd come closer, but as the minutes ticked away I realized this might be my best opportunity. I took careful aim and released the arrow.

My shot seemed good, and I watched as the buck darted back around the tree toward the scrapes while my tracker line zipped out. He ran through some grapevines about 75 yards up the ridge before I lost sight of him. Almost immediately I heard leaves rustling and then silence.

I waited 20 minutes before following up. My spirits rose when I found some hair; I slowly began to follow my tracker line and watch the ground for sign. About 10 yards from where I'd shot I spotted blood. Then, through some small saplings ahead, I saw something white, and as I moved closer I could see it was the underside of a deer.

As I approached I saw my arrow, with tracker line still attached, five yards from the deer. The line must have caught on some saplings and pulled out the arrow. The buck carried a perfect 10-point rack, and although it was only 10 inches wide it was good enough for me.

After showing off my tro-

THEN I SAW an 8-pointer. They went up to each other and started bucking horns. The 8-pointer then walked toward my tree.



I FIRED at the buck, but this time I shot over top of him. The 4-pointer walked over and sniffed the arrow. That was the last I saw of the deer.

phy to the guys at work I called my brother in Pittsburgh. He'd had no luck so far that season, and it didn't take much persuading for him to come up for the last two days. My friend Randy also decided to take Friday off after hearing of my luck.

Jim and Randy met at my place at 4:30 the next morning. I told them I'd find good trees for them and then watch from my tree stand about 75 yards away in case they hit one. Three sets of eyes are better than two, and it gave me an excuse to be in the woods.

I got Jim and Randy situated without any trouble, but then I somehow got turned around in the darkness and couldn't find the tree I wanted to go up. It was starting to get light so I climbed to the top of the ridge and went up the first suitable tree.

It had no sooner gotten light when I heard a deer walking behind me. I slowly turned and saw a 7-pointer walking along the ridge only 10 yards away. He stopped, looked around for a few seconds, then lay down. I wasn't exactly sure where Jim and Randy were, so trying to spook the deer toward them was out of the question. Not knowing what else to do, I waited.

As it turned out, I watched the buck sleep for almost two hours. As the time went on, I thought I'd better do something before Jim or Randy got down and started moving. I started looking for something to throw behind the deer and possibly spook it to them.

I broke a small branch off and threw it, but the buck never moved. Next I pulled out my little flashlight and threw it. The buck picked up its head, looked around and then put its head back down. I threw my knife and then binoculars, but the deer never moved. Finally, I pulled out my key ring, which had about 10 keys on it, and threw it — to no avail.

At that point I was so desperate I started yelling and clapping. The buck looked at me, got up and just stood there. And when I waved my hands and arms again, he



started to come toward me. I couldn't believe it. The buck got to within five yards, veered off and then went 40 yards away and lay back down.

Having no idea what else to do, I figured I'd take off my gloves and then clap and yell some more, but just then the deer got up and took a few steps toward some grapevines. I heard and then saw another deer — an 8-pointer. They went up to each other and started bucking horns. The 8-point then started walking my way and seemed to know something was wrong. He came to the base of my tree and looked up.

That was it for him. One jump and he was down the trail and out of sight. The 7-point, however, lay down again. I clapped and yelled but it was no use — all he did was look at me. I couldn't believe this was happening. I decided to get out of my stand and try to drive him to Jim or Randy.

I slowly shinned down the tree while keeping an eye on the buck. He watched me come all the way down but never moved an inch. I walked to within 30 yards before he jumped up and took off.

I found Jim and Randy still in their trees. They said four does had come by in the morning, but that was it. They heard me yelling but didn't see either of the bucks. I told them what had happened, but they didn't really believe me — at least not until we spent a good half-hour on our hands and knees looking for my keys so we could go home.



FIRST-TIME hunters do remember what they're taught in Hunter-Trapper Education classes, as evidenced by comments the author got when he contacted some of his former students.

First-Timers' Education Pays

By Dennis D. Russell, Sr.
HTE Instructor

BEING A Hunter-Trapper Education instructor has many benefits, but the best, I think, is working with youngsters and first-time hunters. We see them come into the classroom somewhat timid, not knowing what to expect. Then, after 10 to 14 hours of classroom and field work, they leave as well-informed, ethical and safe hunters and trappers.

You might not think we would become attached to these students in such a short period of time, but we do. I can't imagine there's any instructor who doesn't take a genuine interest in the success, safety and well-being of each of his students. We look upon them as being "our kids." If we didn't care, we wouldn't be instructors.

I try to keep track of my students. For example, every year our local newspaper publishes a list of hunters who get deer. I scan the lists to see if any of our former students were lucky enough to get one. I then call those who were and offer my congratulations. They are quite glad I called and somewhat surprised I remembered them. It's our way of showing that we care and, we hope, make them lifelong supporters of the Game Commission.

Last year I decided to survey these "first-timers" when I called them. I wanted to see what entered their minds when the moment of truth came, to see if their classroom training had really paid off.

Only two of our former students were

lucky enough to kill a deer last year, so I went through the newspaper list and called a number of other first-timers. The following is a sample of some of the information I gathered.

I asked where they took their HTE class; how many years they'd been hunting; how HTE had helped them; what their thoughts were when they saw the deer coming; where they aimed; and a number of other questions. After their answers and comments I have added a reference, in parentheses, from their classroom training.

One former student was Jeremy of Freeport. He took our class last August when he was 12 years old, and then shot his first buck, an Elk County 6-point, on opening day.

When he first saw the buck coming, he asked himself if it was a legal one (game identification) and if the shot was safe (know your target and what's beyond it). He said he then got very excited and nervous but somehow managed to aim at the buck some 50 yards away, take the safety off and squeeze the trigger.

Our second student was Jeff from Lower Burrell. Jeff had taken our class six years earlier. He came to us as an eager youngster with little outdoor experience but a big desire to learn about the sport. A good student and easy to work with, Jeff took his first buck in Venango County.

Jeff said he thought he was dreaming when he first saw the buck, but then, almost instantly, everything he had learned in HTE class flashed through his mind. Like Jeremy, Jeff identified the buck as being legal and made certain the shot was safe. He then took careful aim on the buck's shoulder, doing his best to make a quick, clean kill.

Jeff said although he felt some remorse for killing the animal, he knows deer are a renewable resource (wildlife management) and that it would feed his family well. Jeff also felt admiration and a deep respect for the animal (ethics).

At age 13, Tony got a good lesson on the importance of positive target identification. Tony and his dad were on stand when

they saw five deer coming. The father glassed the first three and told Tony to check the other two. They didn't see antlers. His dad told him to keep watching for a trailing buck.

About 10 minutes later, his dad spotted a buck coming down the trail and told Tony to shoot. After a few moments his dad whispered to him, "Why aren't you shooting?"

Tony replied, "Because I can't see any antlers." A few moments later Tony did see antlers and made a fine shot. For Tony and his dad, that trophy will always signify safety and sportsmanship.

Jason of Natrona Heights dropped his first deer last year, a Clearfield County spike. His dad is an experienced hunter and had prepared Jason somewhat before his HTE class.

Jason said his HTE training gave him a better knowledge of game laws, animal identification and wildlife management. Through his training he easily identified his buck as a safe and legal target.

Our last "first-timer," Cindy, wasn't an HTE student. She learned about the sport from her husband, back before HTE classes were mandatory. And as last year's hunt indicates, she learned well. Cindy was on stand when she saw a deer approaching.

As it got closer, she was surprised to find it was a buck. But once she assured herself the deer was legal, she immediately asked herself if it offered a safe shot and then where to aim.

Even though buck fever was sneaking up on her, she put all her thoughts and training together and harvested her first buck. She admired and respected the trophy and was glad to head home with food for the table.

These people are only a sampling of the first-time hunters I talked to. While conducting this survey I began to pick up patterns in the thoughts and reactions of these folks. Hunter-Trapper Education classes are making first-time hunters responsible, well-informed and ethical outdoorsmen. The future of hunting is in good hands with today's HTE students.

Duck Tactics On Lakes & Reservoirs

By Richard Martin

IN MANY PARTS of Pennsylvania, big-water duck hunting is a cut-and-dried proposition. Days before the season, waterfowlers will hurry to a selected lake or reservoir, carefully build an elaborate blind, then spend long hours setting out the huge spreads of decoys necessary to compete with the equally huge spreads of others nearby. After that, it's feast or famine.

Because the diving ducks that favor these larger lakes and reservoirs prefer calm waters where they don't have to swim constantly to maintain position, when they drop in they're likely to head for the lee shore.

Generally speaking, this is true for big flocks, small groups and even singles. Even after the season has started and they've been shot at a few times, many will land in mid-lake and gradually swim to a spread in quieter water. Therefore, a waterfowler sitting on that quiet side with an attractive spread is likely to have some good shooting opportunities.

But if the wind shifts and begins howling directly into the blind, with decoys plunging madly and anchor ropes tangling, action is likely to be poor. That's not to say that on a rare occasion a flock won't pitch in, but failure to take wind direction into account when setting up is likely to result in a light or empty bag.

Fortunately, there are ways to solve the problem of constantly shifting winds. The most natural way is to move as the fronts do, hunting as often as possible in ideal locations. How waterfowlers do that depends on the situation.

On some lakes and reservoirs, blind locations are drawn by lot, and each winner

is allowed only one location. If this is the situation, join with friends to apply for blinds on at least two (three is better) different lakes or reservoirs within easy driving range. Or apply to the same place and hope to be selected for radically different blind locations on the same lake.

If either of those plans work, divide the group's decoys and put a smaller, simpler blind and spread at each location. Putting one on the north shore of the lake, for example, and another on the west side would normally be a good idea because late-season prevailing winds come from those two directions.

On the morning of the hunt, check the wind and choose the best spot. Having a modest number of decoys in a prime location is often a better deal than a huge spread in a poor spot.

On lakes and reservoirs where hunting pressure is light (there are a surprising number of 50- to 100-acre impoundments) you might be able to place two blinds on a single lake: one large with most of your blocks in what's normally the best spot, another smaller one in a second location — again, catering to prevailing winds. It takes only minutes to switch spots if one blind is producing better action.

There are other methods, and some of them work surprisingly well for divers as well as the occasional puddler that might happen by. One is to hunt from a small canoe, johnboat or even a kayak or durable rubber raft, and use just two or three dozen decoys.

This tactic works best on smaller lakes that are still big enough to attract divers. It can also produce on larger waters in rural

areas where there's little or no competition from big spreads. And all it takes is a little bit of camouflage cloth to disguise your boat.

Launch on the quiet lee shore, after checking wind direction, and move out 20 or 30 yards and start tossing decoys. The method works best with magnum decoys, which are more easily seen. Place them in two bunches with a good landing zone in the middle and well within shooting range.

These two bunches can be placed in strings, a J pattern, a V shape or other layout that suits the hunter. Adding a couple of goose decoys on or near shore isn't a bad idea, as these seem to soothe nervous ducks.

Then toss some camouflage cloth over a homemade or commercial frame, or knock together a quick blind from brush or reeds, settle down inside and wait. With the wind at your back, the birds shouldn't be long in coming. The beauty of this method is that the whole rig can be pulled in minutes and moved to a better location if the wind shifts significantly.

State boating law requires one personal

flotation device for each person on board, and especially in cold water it makes a lot of sense to go with the wearable type rather than seat cushions. Manufacturers make camouflaged PFD vests ideally suited for waterfowlers.

Watch out, too, that you don't overload the craft — which is easy to do with hunters, decoys, blind materials and other equipment. Don't venture too far from shore in a small craft, either.

Details, Details

There are many ways to fine-tune these tactics, and to get by with simple blinds and smaller spreads, instead of investing all hopes in a single large operation. But it's important to pay attention to detail.

For example, divers in smaller waters tend to be spookier, and when they're decoying in to only two or three dozen blocks, anything out of place can make them flare. Blinds, no matter how hastily built and temporary they are, should be made of natural and local materials.

Just about every hunter has seen a beautiful blind made of corn shocks on a lake



WHILE MANY waterfowlers spend a lot of time and money on huge decoy spreads, the author says smaller outlays wisely placed will perform just as well. The key is to pay attention to details such as wind direction.

where no cornfields are even close. They stand out like sore thumbs to waterfowl.

Build blinds out of materials found right along the shore if possible. A piece of matching camouflage cloth with a few local willows and perhaps some driftwood works fine and will beat something that's obviously out of place. Little things count, especially on smaller waters.

Puddle ducks? The method works as well, perhaps even better, for puddlers. These ducks favor smaller waters such as farm ponds, marshes and sloughs, and with the exception of black ducks, puddlers seem less wary. Mallards, woodies and others will decoy readily to a small, quickly placed spread in the right location.

To win here, sometimes it's necessary only to find a likely pond or cluster of ponds, wade or paddle out on the lee side, and toss a dozen big or even average size dekes in a likely pattern. Then head for shore and sit in handy cover.

If nothing happens after a while, pull the decoys and try elsewhere. The beauty of this technique, once again, is that it takes only minutes to build or break up a spread.

Whatever the choice of places and tactics, it's important to keep diver and puddle duck behavior firmly in mind. Whether in rolling farmland and woodlots or lakes below steep-sided forest hills, diving ducks tend to touch down on a lake or reservoir and stay there, feeding on the spot. They'll fly occasionally, of course, or new flocks

will move in. But divers will usually remain on a given body of water all day, particularly in rough weather.

So if hunters move in at dawn or before and set up a quick spread in the right location, paying attention to the wind, action should be steady or at least occasional from daylight to dusk.

Puddle ducks, on the other hand, tend to overnight on a particular pond, lake or backwater. They head out to feed not long after dawn, then sometimes return and head out again in the afternoon for more field pickings before coming back to overnight again.

So unless you know for sure that good numbers of puddlers are using a given lake or pothole, the best bet is scout a number of waters. Cruise country roads in early morning and glass for concentrations or fliers dropping into or leaving a particular lake. Then get permission and make a quick setup for the evening shoot, perhaps leaving the decoys out for the next day.

The point is to not waste all day sitting in an unproductive spot in normal weather. It is worth sitting tight at first light (briefly), late morning and evening, which are the prime times on small waters.

Waterfowling comes down to a simple choice: build a big spread and wait patiently, hoping for enough good days to outweigh the bad, or go for smaller waters and/or smaller spreads that can be assembled quickly. The latter choice can often be a

good one, as long as the hunter takes into account the variables of wind direction, duck species and water.

Whatever the choice, waterfowling provides for exciting hunting, and as many hunters have learned, the flavor of roast duck is an outstanding reward.

SMALL PONDS often lend themselves to small decoy spreads that are quickly and easily transported. Don't stay too long in a spot that produces no action.



Bushytails:

Proving Ground for Whitetails



BY CHARLES E. BRANTHOOVER

MY LEG MUSCLES screamed with each shaky step, but I was determined to climb the steep hillside. My destination was a stand of beech and oak halfway up the hill. The pain in my legs came from doing little besides sitting behind my desk, but today was the first day of squirrel season and I was anxious to get afield.

My squirrel hunting method is simple. Before season I locate good squirrel country away from the beaten paths. Then, early in the morning on the season opener, I push hard to get there, take a stand and then, after the woods quiet down, wait for the squirrels to come to me.

I had seen so many squirrels and their tracks in the light snow during the previous deer season that I was convinced this had to be the best place in the state to hunt. But I hadn't counted on the fact that I was in good shape during deer season. Now each step was about as graceful and quiet as a raging bull in a potato chip factory.

The squirrels were there that particular opening day in Potter County, but they were always out of range and darting off to the next county before I could get within range. When my legs finally gave out and I was forced to sit, two bushytails fell to my shotgun. Maybe that was the best thing that could have happened to me.

If I had followed my own hunting method and waited the squirrels out in the first place, I may have bagged more; but I always seemed to see them out of range and tried to stalk them.

As I sat under the hemlock that day, thinking of all the squirrels I had seen, a 5-point buck came into a grove of trees below me. I watched as it fed on the plentiful acorns and was astounded when it bedded down so close I could have hit it with a rock. I did a lot of thinking that day as I watched the buck. Somehow I didn't want to move and destroy the magic of the moment.

My thoughts carried me from past squirrel seasons, to turkey seasons, and ultimately to buck seasons. It was then I realized squirrel season gave me the perfect opportunity to shake the cobwebs from a dulled hunting brain and force the rust from stiffened joints and limbs. Applying myself the right way in the early seasons, I thought, could only hone my skills for later seasons, and increase my stamina — which on that day was seriously lacking.

With those thoughts in mind, I decided from that day on to hunt squirrels the same

way I hunt deer. As soon as I arrived at the edge of good squirrel country I would begin a slow, very careful, still-hunt. Carefully picking each step and testing the ground before putting weight on my feet, I constantly scanned ahead for any movement at all. The flick of a tail, rustle of leaves or, occasionally, the bounce of a limb would alert me to game.

The results of hunting this way were amazing, the benefits obvious. I found that by learning to walk quietly in freshly fallen, crisp leaves, it was a cinch to walk quietly later in the seasons when leaves were wet or snow had fallen. I immediately began to see more game. The thrill of walking up on a flock of turkeys, a feeding buck, and even an occasional grouse, added a perspective to squirrel hunting unknown to me before.

The slow stalk method also toned muscles more quickly and less painfully than my previous method of forced walking. Perhaps it is a form of isometrics — the slight strain of carefully placing each tentative step tenses many muscles. Whatever the reason, I felt my body getting in shape much quicker and better, and by deer season I was in excellent physical condition.

My woods vision skills became much sharper earlier in the season. The still-hunt forced me to be more alert, and the end result was that I began to see more deer in deer season — and fewer tails disappearing over hilltops.

I had discovered not only a better way to hunt squirrels, but also a “new” season when the woods are alive with sights, sounds and smells that I had missed before. Instead of sitting under a hemlock, daydreaming, I was attuned to nature and I found myself enjoying all the hunting seasons more intensely.

If you want to hone your skills and improve your chances for deer this year, try bushytails. You may well find they are the proving ground for whitetails.

PRACTICING STILL-HUNTING techniques while in pursuit of squirrels can bring some fascinating nature sightings: a feeding buck, a scratching flock of turkeys and perhaps even a grouse.



Spring in September, Thoughts of December

By William Hunter

AMATE OF MINE asked me the other day what I could possibly miss about home. Given the circumstances, the question was understandable. We had taken advantage of a cloudless winter day and trotted off to the local beach.

This August day was much like the rest of the winter here in Australia — dry, sunny and mild, warmed by 70-degree temperatures and a brisk eastern wind blowing off the Tasmanian Sea. As we looked back over Sydney Harbour and the Opera House, the waves rolled in like whipped cream on top of Jello.

Expecting my answer to be family and friends, which is of course true, I caught him by surprise and said “Penn’s Woods.”

He didn’t know Penn or his woods, which gave me an easy opening to share an understanding of my longings.

I explained that for me the outdoors in August normally means a race between my father and me to see who can pinch the most blackberries from the bush in our suburban Pittsburgh home. The blackberries finish off just in time to greet the oncoming currants and mulberries that line the rickety railroad tie border of our backyard.

My friend still didn’t seem to understand, arguing that Australia is year round home to delicious mangoes, paw paw, star fruit and an assortment of other South Pacific fruits.



ON THE UNDERSIDE of the world, the author explains the allure of Pennsylvania, and of deer hunting, to an Australian friend.

"It isn't just the fruits," I persisted. "August is also the countdown to my favorite part of the year."

Once again he looked a bit quizzical and asked: "Summer is over, isn't it? Doesn't it just get cold and snowy?" Since he came from a land where summer occupies nine months of the year, I knew I had my work cut out for me.

August, I explained, is a practice session. It's time for my friend George Pastor and me to waste our first five shots before exploding the first of those free flying clay pigeons.

Once we've tuned our shotguns and our aim, it's time then to break out our rifles and see if we can still hit small targets at 100 yards.

When the groups get down to quarter size (explaining a quarter is difficult because their coins are much larger and heavier), we head out to our farmer friend and attempt to reduce the groundhog population for him.

My Australian friend is familiar with target shooting and even shot a wild pig several years ago, but groundhogs were not in his animal vocabulary. I suggested they look like a wombat with brown fur and stubby legs.

As I moved onto my September description, which included our own blue skies, gusty winds and hayfields, I suddenly realized tomorrow, Sept. 1, was the first day of spring here. I wondered if the feelings of new growth and revitalization would warm me as the breezes do today.

As the day wore on and my skin began to burn, we listened to the laugh of the kookaburra, the "gurgle" of a carrowond (large black and white bird similar to a

crow) and the tweeting of hundreds of parrots and lorikeets fluttering above us in the coconut palms.

"Well, what do you do in October?" he asked right on cue. Now, I thought, here is my chance to tell a few hunting stories that will make him want to experience Penn's Woods for himself.

I relived several tales of the days when my grandfather and father plodded their

way through the hills of southwestern Pennsylvania with our dog, Tricia, and me. I wore an orange vest and cap long before I could carry a gun, and on more than one occasion my father missed a bird because he was too busy laughing at me as I screamed "There he goes! There he goes!"

This tall and lanky Aussie was laughing just as hard as my dad used to and was curious about this hunting season I enjoy so much.

When I told him I shot three rabbits in one season he laughed even harder. "Blimey,

mate," he said, "you could shoot three rabbits in three minutes almost anywhere you go in the outback." I explained that our rabbits aren't nearly as plentiful, and we agreed to suggest to Pennsylvania that it import a few thousand of what Australians call the "hare plague."

He couldn't get over the idea that Americans shot squirrels, but he appreciated the concept much more after I described my grandmother's squirrel pot pie.

My friend had heard of white-tailed deer before but never had the pleasure of watching them race through the woods, tails straight up like waving antennae. I'd just had two great deer seasons back to back, and I shut my eyes to think how best to describe what deer hunting is all about.



AUGUST IS A TIME to pick berries, and practice rifle and shotgun shooting skills. It's also a time to hunt groundhogs, a foreign notion to Hunter's Aussie buddy.

Two years earlier I'd been primed for deer season. I was hunting in Clinton County with a group of fraternity brothers from Lock Haven University, and we had our spots all lined up.

I spent the final Saturday of small game season hunting in Westmoreland County with my father. As Dad and I kicked around the thick cover along a creek bed, we noticed a deer some 200 yards up the hill at the edge of the woods. We weren't expecting such a sight in mid-afternoon, but my father grabbed the binoculars from his pouch and scoped out this wanderer.

When the animal turned toward the field, binoculars were hardly necessary. Even from that distance we could count at least six points. I could see the excitement in my father's eyes.

And just like all my other deer hunting seasons up until then, on the evening of opening day I made my sorrowful call home to report my lackluster news. On the other end, however, my brother Steven was ecstatic. He had bagged a 180-pound 8-point near home. It took him three shots — the first two with the safety on.

Being an avid sporting enthusiast, my

Australian friend said with eagerness that he'd like to hear part two of my story.

The following deer season I had staked out a ridge overlooking a valley outside of Franklin. I waited all morning and listened to a chorus of shots ringing throughout the surrounding hills, but not a peep came from the area I was hunting. Finally, just as I was preparing to settle in for a snooze, a monster buck came walking down the hill as slow as could be.

What Luck

What luck. The biggest buck I had ever seen was not even 50 yards away. He had seen me first, so I froze and watched. As he turned his head, I lifted my .30-30, took careful aim and pulled the trigger.

I couldn't believe it. Instead of a boom, I heard the hammer hit the shell and then a sizzle. My chances of getting him then were next to none. The sound of metal hitting metal had sent the trophy bounding up the steep hill. I got off a quick shot, but it was fruitless; my opportunity was gone.

My mate suggested that I was probably just a terrible shot and that he could have done better. He even offered a challenge. Later in the week, he took me kangaroo shooting. I claimed six and one jackrabbit, while he bagged only three and one red fox.

When he asked if I'd miss Australia when I was gone, I told him the red soil, colorful birdlife, gum trees and native wildlife have made lasting impressions, and that I had a 'roo skin to take back with me.

"When are you going back, mate?" he asked.

"November 15, just in time to chase that 9-point around Franklin again," I said. As we parted we both agreed that he should come and meet Penn and his woods some day and share in my love of the outdoors.

AUSTRALIA HAS its share of nuisance wildlife, not the least of which are rabbits and kangaroos. Rabbits are such a problem they're referred to as a plague.





A post driver hammered in Lancaster County streambank fenced in the watershed. For the Game reaching the 100-mile mark efforts as it was cause for program, money, materials want to stop the degradation streambanks improve water wildlife — while at the same

PHOTOS BY HAL KORE



Livestock break down streambanks, causing waterways to choke with silt and nutrient pollution. But once the fence is installed, natural vegetation makes a quick comeback. The plants stabilize the banks and keep topsoil from washing into creeks. They also filter chemical and nutrient runoff. Humans, wildlife and livestock all benefit.



On a hot, hazy June mo
Duncan honors
Kauffman for his comi
streambank fencing
became involved in th
because "it just m

Partners in the streambank fencing program include:

- ♦ **Game Commission**
- ♦ **Dept. of Environmental Resources**
- ♦ **Environmental Protection Agency**
- ♦ **USDA Soil Conservation Service**
- ♦ **Penn State Cooperative Extension**



MAILES

a golden fence post on James
in June, symbolizing the 100th mile
s portion of the Chesapeake Bay
mission and its project partners,
s much a catalyst to spur further
ation. In the streambank fencing
oor are provided to farmers who
their banks by livestock. Fenced
ly and provide food and cover for
making for healthier livestock.

OSMAN AND SCOTT RUPP



Aside from cleaning our
water systems, streambank
fencing (fences are solar-
powered where practical)
also helps wildlife. The
plants that grow as soon as
stock are kept out provide
food and cover for a variety
of animals. Streambank
fencing creates travel
corridors between islands of
cover, important in today's
fragmented farmland habitat.



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Streambank fencing benefits:

- ♦ **soil stabilization**
- ♦ **cleaner water**
- ♦ **improved wildlife habitat**
- ♦ **chemical/nutrient run-off filtration**
- ♦ **better pasture management**



FIELD NOTES



Just Wing Him?

WASHINGTON COUNTY — While participating in an environmental forum with sixth graders in the McGuffy school district, fellow officer Regis Senko and I fielded an unexpected question. A boy asked if it was okay to shoot someone caught poaching on your land. After some laughter from the room, I explained how wrong it would be to shoot someone. "What if you only shot him in the knee?" the boy asked after I'd finished. — WCO Thomas A. Fazi, Slovan.



Bachelor's Club

Each spring the Commission releases surplus hen pheasants in hopes they'll nest in the wild. Larry and David McClelland told me that when the first bird went out of the crate in a release near Sandy Lake, a ringneck flew up to meet her. They were last seen walking together into a gully. Mike Colgan also had a rooster fly out of a nearby woods and cackle as he released hens. It appears these "bachelors" were grateful for the arrival of some females. — Information & Education Supervisor Bob MacWilliams, Sandy Lake.

Kids Teaching Kids

JUNIATA COUNTY — I'd like to commend McAlisterville Girl Scout Troop No. 319 for the outstanding assembly they presented to the Fayette Elementary School. The girls spent more than four months learning about black bears and other animals, and then they put together a slide presentation to teach other students to appreciate the wildlife. Thanks also go to troop leader Mary Beth Germak and to school principal Gerald Hibbs for their involvement. — WCO Dan Clark, Honey Grove.

Surprise!

BLAIR COUNTY — We moved up our hunter-ed class schedule because of the antlerless license timetable, and the Martinsburg Sportsmen's Club wanted to hold one in April. I confirmed the dates, but I asked them to change the last day because it was my birthday. When the class was over and we were packing up, the instructors called me to the back of the room. As I approached I could see a birthday cake covered with candles — formed in the shape of a question mark because they didn't know my age. Thanks, guys. — WCO Don Martin, Hollidaysburg.

Avoid Nests

While inspecting SGL 154 in Erie County the day before spring gobbler season, my foreman and I found two turkey nests with eggs. Both had been abandoned. It's hard to say what occurred, but it's an example of what could happen if a hunter disturbs a nesting hen. If while hunting you kick up a hen, leave the area right away, and don't try to locate the nest. — LMO Pat Anderson, Titusville.

Gun Control

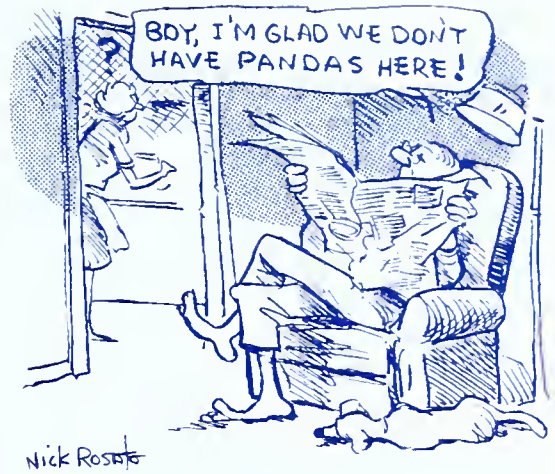
PHILADELPHIA COUNTY — All too often we see in the news media stories about “gun control,” and I believe it’s time for us to get on the gun control bandwagon. No, I don’t mean taking firearms away from law-abiding citizens. By gun control I mean proper gun handling, safe gun storage and legitimate forms of firearm use. Gun control can also mean educating youngsters in safe firearms use. Enroll your children in a youth shooting program or field day, or a Hunter-Trapper Education program. This will start them on a lifetime of proper gun control. — WCO Richard J. Shire, Philadelphia.

Suffering at our Hands

Weasels aren’t plentiful in the Northwest Region; a person can walk the woods for years without seeing one. But recently I found where three had been killed on Route 308 near Moniteau High School. It could’ve been one member of a family group, and when it was hit the others stayed until they were run over, too. Or perhaps when one weasel was hit, its powerful scent glands attracted other weasels to the road. It’s just another example of how wildlife suffers from our encroachment. — LMO Ned Weston, West Sunbury.

Taking It Seriously

MERCER COUNTY — Recently I arrested four people for camping and damaging trees on SGL 130 near Henderson. They said they didn’t know they were on game lands, which was hard to believe since they were only 150 yards from our parking lot. They cut down several live food-producing trees for firewood and damaged several others by stripping off bark or pounding nails into them. There was also litter around the site. Game lands are managed for wildlife, and we take any abuse of them seriously. — WCO Donald G. Chaybin, Greenville.



Heavy Sentences

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY — Many people object to the fines imposed by the Game and Wildlife Code, but our penalties are mild compared to some places. When the Chinese government arrested two men for illegal possession and trafficking of two panda bears, the sentence was death. — WCO Peter F. Aiken, Watson-town.

Hey, Bubba!

PERRY COUNTY — I stopped along Route 11/15 to grab a cup of tea, and when I pulled in to the store I saw a van with Tennessee plates. As I was getting out of my truck, a woman and young boy were coming out of the store. As we passed, they both said “Good morning, Bubba.” I’ve since found out that “Bubba” is a polite form of address for law enforcement officers in the South, but it certainly doesn’t jive with my idea of a “Bubba.” — WCO Leroy Everett, Newport.

Environmentally Sound

ELK COUNTY — While playing recorded bird calls as part of an envirothon test, I was pleased when one group of high schoolers got all five right. But I couldn’t keep a smile off my face as another group debated whether the sound of a drumming grouse was a dirt bike or a lawn mower being started. — WCO Dick Bodenhorn, Ridgway.

A Softie

BEDFORD COUNTY — While visiting with Farm-Game Cooperator Jim Llewellyn, I commented on how badly deer had stripped the corn he kept in a wire corn crib. "Yeah," he said, "they hit it pretty hard, but that electric wire keeps them away from it." Then he said when the snow got really deep he turned it off. "I kinda felt sorry for 'em," he said. — WCO Tim Flanigan, Bedford.



Out on a Limb

As I approached one of our wood duck nest boxes on SGL 58, I noticed something in the tree that held the box. A large black snake was perched about 15 feet up — two feet above the nest box. While black snakes are capable of climbing trees, I found it remarkable that it was able to get past the 3-foot widest stainless steel predator guard. — LMO Keith P. Sanford, Mifflinville.

Crash Course

CUMBERLAND COUNTY — Last spring I was summoned to a house where a large bird had flown through two windowpanes into a upstairs bedroom. I was surprised to find it was a grouse, a male that was in good condition except for a few missing feathers on its head. I caught it and then released it several miles away. I figured the grouse was searching for a mate — looking for love, as it were, in all the wrong places. — WCO Jim Binder, Shippensburg.

Live and Let Live

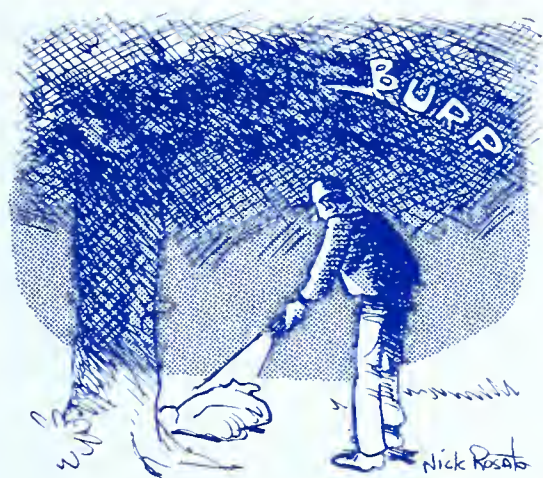
LYCOMING COUNTY — I often write about people/wildlife conflicts, which will continue to increase as wildlife habitat is lost. People who move to the country must realize they're moving into wildlife's home and that damage to plants, trees and gardens will occur. Wildlife will walk on their property (which belonged to the animals before humans came) and they will have to deal with the "problems" caused by a variety of species. Learn to live with nature: The Commission can't trap all the wildlife people can't accept. — WCO Daniel E. Marks, Montoursville.

Timing Is Everything

VENANGO COUNTY — Each spring we conduct mourning dove call-count surveys for the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. This year, two sportsmen went with me. The 20-mile survey begins a half-hour before sunrise and consists of listening for three minutes, driving one mile, and listening another three minutes. I have to say that getting up at 4 a.m. is not my favorite thing, but this year's survey was almost enjoyable. We heard doves, crows, turkeys, grouse and even a quail. Even though I had to put up with a lot of comments about my timekeeping, having Dewey and O.B. along made the trip much faster. — WCO Leonard C. Hribar, Seneca.

Rising from the Spoil

A recent joint project by the Game Commission, Turnpike Commission and the Lehigh County Solid Waste Management agency has brought life to a 3-acre spoil pile along the turnpike. We worked leaf mulch into the soil to increase nutrients, and volunteers planted 3,000 seedlings from Howard Nursery. We also built brushpiles and brush rows out of tree limbs for cover. Birdsfoot trefoil was broadcast for erosion control and as a food source. This effort will benefit wildlife as well as add some scenic beauty to the pike. — LMO Bruce C. Metz, Schwenksville.



Ghostly Apparation

SCHUYLKILL COUNTY — Hearing a commotion outside his home late one night, Tom McGovern of Branch Township went to investigate. He could hardly believe his eyes when he saw what looked like a ghost running across the yard. The white object went up a tree and immediately fell back to the ground and lay motionless. Tom went over and found the “ghost” to be a white garbage bag filled with trash — and a frightened black bear perched above him in the tree. — WCO Stephen S. Hower, Pine Grove.

Pass with Care

I was traveling along a newly paved road where the construction crew had just placed self-adhesive lane markers. I came around a turn and saw a squirrel struggling with something in the middle of the highway. To my surprise, it was tearing up the double yellow lines the crew had just put down. — LMO Edward Zindell, Wilkes-Barre.

Bearded Hen

FOREST COUNTY — Joseph Savona of Blue Ridge shot a turkey with an 8-inch beard during spring gobbler season. He noticed it had no spurs on its legs. When he dressed the bird he found one fully formed egg and 26 others down to the size of a pea. Savona called the region office, and I drove out to verify that it was a bearded hen. — WCO Alfred N. Pedder, Marienville.

In Compliance

LUZERNE COUNTY — While walking some remote areas on the opening day of spring gobbler season, I came across several hunters along the area’s many pipelines and power lines. I’m pleased to report all were in compliance with the new fluorescent orange law. — WCO Edward J. Zindell, Wilkes-Barre.

Procrastination Pays

Back in April my wife and I discussed taking down the bird feeder for summer. We didn’t get around to it for a week or so, and before we could take it down a male indigo bunting appeared. He’d arrived a few weeks earlier than buntings usually do, and apparently because insects were in short supply he was a steady customer at our feeder for a couple weeks. — LMO James Deniker, Sandy Lake.



The Wrong Guy

UNION COUNTY — On a cold, windy day last deer season, I got a report of a person hunting while under suspension. Deputy Herman Reichley and I finally spotted a hunter in a thick stand of pines; we thought it might be our man. Herman stayed with the truck while I sneaked up on the suspect, crawling through thick brush and pines to get close. After a long, cold stalk, I rushed out of the pines — only to find the “hunter” was a scarecrow. — WCO Bernie Schmader, Millmont.

Alive and Kicking

BRADFORD COUNTY — Our culvert bear traps attract a lot of attention when we transport them, and one day as I gassed up my truck a woman began poking around the trap. I was engrossed in a safety check of the trailer, and just as she tip-toed up to peer into the ventilation holes, I vigorously shook the trailer tongue — grunting with exertion as I did so. The woman leaped into the air, sideways, and entered her car without opening the door. — WCO Richard P. Larnerd, Warren Center.

Opening Doors

WASHINGTON COUNTY — July and August are great months to look for new places to hunt. Since a lot of hay fields are being mowed, why not help farmers by thinning out some of their groundhogs — after asking permission, of course. You'd be surprised at how many doors this can open for fall hunting seasons. — WCO Regis F. Senko, Washington.



More than It Bargained For

BERKS COUNTY — While patrolling I saw what I thought was two groundhogs in a field. I stopped to look through my binoculars and saw it was a cat stalking a groundhog. When the cat got within five feet of its intended victim, the chuck rushed the cat — sending it to look for easier prey. — WCO Chuck Lincoln, Reading.

Identity Crisis

WESTMORELAND COUNTY — Deputy Dale Sleasman told me at least four ospreys had been fishing Donegal Lake, sharing the aquatic resource with earth-bound anglers. Dale fishes there, too, and he's heard the ospreys identified as chicken hawks, kingfishers, and as "stocked bald eagles released by the Game Commission." — WCO R.D. Hixson, Ligonier.

No Justification

BLAIR COUNTY — Deputies Rick Weimer and Tom McMann recently investigated a complaint regarding a man shooting squirrels out of season. Thanks to a concerned citizen, they were able to arrest him. During the course of the investigation, they asked him to explain his actions. The man said he'd just gone through a divorce and wanted to take out his frustrations. Sounds like his ex-wife got out while the getting was good. — WCO Steve Kleiner, Hollidaysburg.

Tip-Off Pays

LYCOMING COUNTY — Last spring several fellow officers and I arrested a man for shooting a gobbler — a beautiful 20-pounder — over bait. If it hadn't been for a phone call from a concerned citizen, the poacher might've gotten away with it. It's up to us to protect wildlife by turning in unscrupulous people. I want the caller to know that justice was served. — WCO Terry D. Wills, Williamsport.

Lands of Opportunity

CRAWFORD COUNTY — While responding to a beaver problem on a public access cooperator's property, I saw deer, mallards, wood ducks and a host of other wildlife. Thanks to this landowner and others like him, hunters, trappers and other outdoor recreationists can enjoy sites such as this. Remember to ask permission before entering these properties, and treat the land as if it were your own. — WCO Mark A. Allegro, Meadville.

Deer Damage Farm Sign-Up Begins

LANDOWNERS who want to join the Commission's Deer Damage Area farm program should contact the agency by Sept. 4. By becoming a cooperating property owner, farmers can take advantage of special, extended deer seasons to cut down on crop depredation.

This program is now four years old. When it began, sportspeople could hunt antlerless deer after Christmas with regular firearms on so-called "green tag farms" — providing they had a valid antlerless license.

Last year, a pilot either-sex hunt was conducted in four counties on green tag farms during what historically has been a bucks-only season.

This year either-sex hunting during the general antlered firearms season will be permitted on Deer Damage Areas in Armstrong, Bedford, Berks, Clearfield, Crawford, Dauphin, Erie, Fulton, Greene, Huntingdon, Indiana, Schuylkill, Susquehanna, Wayne, Wyoming and York counties. Hunters must have county-specific antlerless tags in order to shoot an antlerless deer during buck season.

Taking a deer of either sex during buck season is permitted on Deer Damage Areas **only** in the aforementioned 16 counties. Deer Damage Areas are marked by green signs.

The antlerless hunt on Deer Damage Areas across the state will run from Dec. 27 through Jan. 22. Again, hunters must have an antlerless license for the county in which the farm is located.

The Deer Damage Area program is one step the Commission is taking to stem growing crop damage problems. By encouraging farmers and their neighbors to allow public hunting on their lands, it is hoped the additional harvests will bring herds more in line with goals both hunters and farmers can live with.

Landowners who've been involved in the program have generally been satisfied with its results, particularly since the advent of either-sex hunting. It's hoped that

recent changes in the deer management system (each antlerless license having its own ear tag and report card) will bring about an even higher antlerless kill in areas where deer are causing problems.

Landowners who contact the Commission to enroll in one of the public access programs, and thereby become eligible for Deer Damage Area status, will be contacted by a WCO before Sept. 25. Officers will provide the green signs which signify to the hunting public that the property is open during the special seasons.

Because deer that are causing problems for farmers don't necessarily live only on those properties, the Commission wants landowners to encourage their neighbors to allow hunting. Under the Deer Damage Area program, neighboring farms or properties may be included with a green tag farm.

As is common courtesy, hunters should ask permission to hunt green tag farms. That way farmers know who is on their properties and can also direct hunting efforts to where success is most likely.

Green signs will be posted by Oct. 1, informing hunters that an area needs relief from crop damage — in time for archery and gun seasons. Hunters will be able to obtain listings of properties enrolled in the program by contacting the appropriate region office, beginning in mid-November. Send a self-addressed, stamped business envelope to the region office for the county in which you plan to hunt.



Franklin Regional High wins its 2nd Envirothon

A record 49 teams from conservation districts across the state converged on Pine Grove Furnace State Park June 18-19 for the annual state Envirothon championships.

The team from Franklin Regional High School, Westmoreland County, notched its second consecutive win this year with a score of 441 out of 500.

Schulkill County's Blue Mountain High School likewise repeated as runner-up, scoring a 410 this time around. Students from Parkland Senior High School in Lehigh County finished in third place just three points behind Blue Mountain.

The annual competition tests each school's best Envirothon team in aquatics, forestry, wildlife and soils, and a topic that changes each year. This year the selected subject was pesticides.

Under blue skies and a hot morning sun, groups of teams rotated from station to station. The Game Commission manned the wildlife station, Fish & Boat handled aquatics, the Soil Conservation Service took charge of soils, DER was responsible for forestry, and the Department of Agriculture and Penn State's Office of Pesticide Education teamed up to administer the pesticide test.

Once at a station, the teams were handed the tests for which they'd been studying, followed by on-site examinations. Each station was worth 100 points.



Theresa Alberici

FRANKLIN REGIONAL HIGH School, Westmoreland County, captured its second consecutive state Envirothon title. This year's squad consisted of (from left) Mel Wohlgemuth, Justin Augustine, Jana Comstock, Laura Wakefield, Jonathan Billings and adviser Mary Jane Seipler.

The Envirothon is a project of the Pennsylvania Association of Conservation Districts and the State Conservation Commission. Also, for the second year in a row, Hershey Foods Corp. made a \$25,000 grant to the program.

Teachers guide students through a standardized program of environmental education. The teams then vie for county titles, which qualify them to compete at the state level. The state champion team goes on to nationals, which are being held at Niagara Falls this month.

"Our state has a strong and dedicated Envirothon program," state Envirothon coordinator Jenny Pyers said. "It's evident in the enthusiasm the students are showing, and in the fact that we do very well at nationals."

Pennsylvania teams have won the national championships four times in the title's five-year history. Last year the team finished second to Maryland.

PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES who require special assistance at Game Commission public functions should contact the telephone number listed with the announcement, the appropriate region office or the Harrisburg headquarters. Toll-free numbers for each region are listed in every issue of *Game News*; the Harrisburg number is (717) 787-4250.

Apply soon for goose blinds

Waterfowlers who want to hunt the controlled areas at Middle Creek and Pymatuning may start applying for blinds Sept. 1.

Application information is found on page 27 of the hunting and trapping digest that comes with licenses. The required application form is on page 28.

Application forms will be accepted no earlier than Sept. 1 and no later than Sept. 20. Hunters may apply for only one wildlife management area, and only one application per person is allowed.

Successful applicants, chosen by random drawing, will be notified by mail of their reservations.

\$1.9 million in fines collected

Fines totaling \$1,920,380 resulted from violations of Pennsylvania's Game and Wildlife Code in 1992. Wildlife conservation officers and deputies prosecuted 9,740 cases last year. In addition, 9,260 written warnings were issued.

As in past years, the most common Game and Wildlife Code violation in 1992 involved illegal spotlighting, resulting in 1,205 prosecutions.

Loaded firearms in or against vehicles resulted in 828 cases. The third most common violation in 1992, with

707 cases, was the unlawful taking or possession of wildlife. Failure to wear required fluorescent orange safety clothing accounted for 599 prosecutions. Failure to properly tag big game ranked fifth with 579 prosecutions.

Littering violations accounted for 554 cases. The illegal operation of vehicles on Game Commission owned or leased lands resulted in nearly 500 prosecutions. There were 385 violations of Safety Zones and more than 220 cases involving illegal baiting or enticement of wildlife.

State due \$6.2 million in federal funds

Pennsylvania this year is eligible to receive \$6,281,908 in federal aid for wildlife restoration and land acquisition from the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service under the Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act.

Commonly referred to as the Pittman-Robertson program, funds are generated from an 11 percent tax on firearms, ammunition and archery

equipment, and a 10 percent tax on handguns. The P-R program funds up to 75 percent of all national wildlife restoration programs.

Pennsylvania ranks fourth among states receiving Pittman-Robertson funds in this fiscal year. Texas will receive \$7,201,000, followed by Alaska, \$6,557,000, and Michigan, \$6,488,436.

Middle Creek, Pymatuning lecture schedule

Lectures at the Middle Creek Wildlife Management Area Visitors Center, located near Kleinfeltersville, begin at 7:30 p.m.

Scheduled for the next several weeks are: "Bobcat Natural History and Research" by PGC Biologist Jack Giles, Aug. 11-12; "Outdoor Survival Skills" by PGC's Carl Graybill, Aug. 18-19; and "Pheasant Restoration in Pennsylvania" by PGC Biologist Bret Wallingford, Sept. 1-2.

Lectures at the Pymatuning Wildlife Management Area Visitors Center, located near Linesville, begin at 2 p.m. Scheduled for this month is "White-Tailed Deer" by WCO Michael Ondik, Aug. 21.



WCO Bernard J. Schmader of Millmont was named Shikar-Safari Club International conservation officer of the year. Schmader, assigned to Union County in 1976, first served the agency as a deputy in 1965. He is pictured with presenter S. Soski Pireoff.

Outstanding P G C Employees



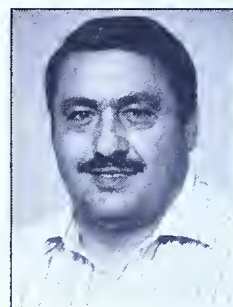
WCO Clifford E. Guindon, Jr., of Boswell was honored as officer of the year by the Northeast Law Enforcement Chiefs Association. Guindon has served Somerset County since 1985; he holds a wildlife management degree.



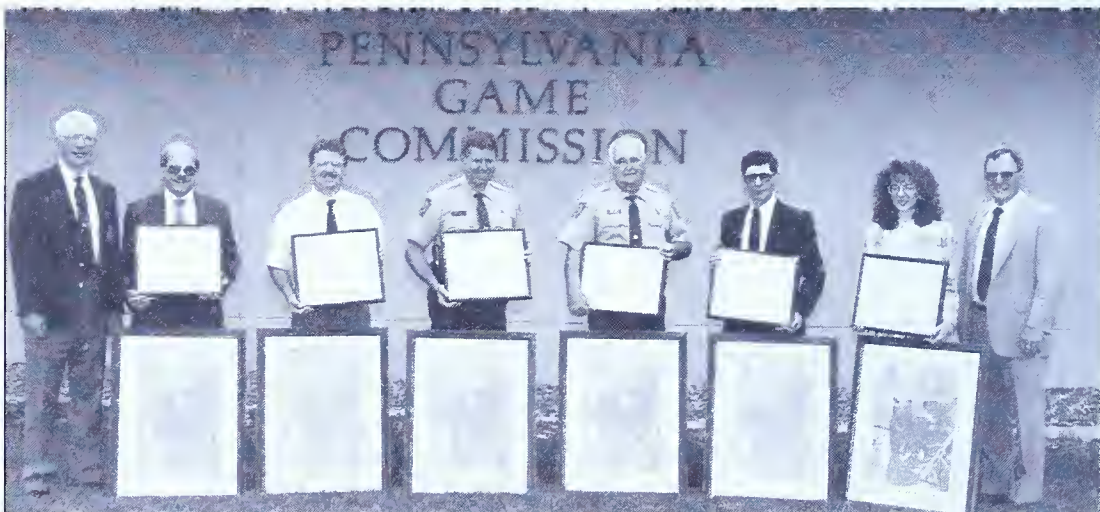
25-YEAR CLUB
Billie G. Cromwell
Labor Foreman
Southcentral Region
Needmore



25-YEAR CLUB
Harvey F. Fouse
Labor Foreman
Southcentral Region
James Creek



25-YEAR CLUB
Harry E. Richards
Director
Southwest Region
New Florence



PGC EMPLOYEES OF THE YEAR for 1992 are, from left: Biologist Gary Alt, videographer Hal Korber, WCO Richard Shire (also named 1992 Sportsman of the Year by the Philadelphia Federation of Sportsmen's Clubs), LMO Bob Muir, Food & Cover Corpsman Robert Spang, and Law Enforcement secretary Jayne Archer. They are flanked by Commission President George Miller and Executive Director Pete Duncan.

Game Commission Sale Items

Books & Videos

Game Commission publications cover subjects from firearms and building nesting devices to animal lore and wild game cookery.

Quantity		Price
_____	<i>Shooter's Corner</i> , by Don Lewis	\$15.00
_____	<i>Birds of Pennsylvania</i> , by James & Lillian Wakeley	10.00
_____	<i>Pennsylvania Big Game Records, 1965-1986</i>	10.00
_____	<i>Gone for the Day</i> , by Ned Smith	4.00
_____	<i>Wild Game Cookbook</i>	4.00
_____	<i>Woodworking for Wildlife</i>	3.00
_____	<i>Ducks at a Distance</i>	1.00
_____	"On the Trail of Pennsylvania's Black Bears" video	29.95

Working Together for Wildlife

Proceeds from Working Together for Wildlife sales support nongame projects and research.

Art Prints — \$125		WTFW Patches — \$3	
_____	1993 "Bear Run" by Bob Sopchick	_____	1993 Black Bear
_____	1992 "Spring Strut" by Taylor Oughton	_____	1988 Snowy Egret
_____	1991 "At The Den" by Laura Mark-Finberg	_____	1987 Elk
_____	1990 "Coming Home" by Gerald Putt	_____	1986 Kestrel
_____	1989 "Last Glance" by Jack Paluh	_____	1985 Bobcat
_____	1988 "Snowy Egret" by John Pritko		
_____	1987 "Autumn Challenge" by Bob Sopchick		
_____	1986 "Country Lane Kestrel" by Bob Sopchick		

Charts & Binders

Our popular bird and mammal charts illustrated by famed wildlife artist Ned Smith.

_____	Set No. 1 (birds — 4 charts) 20" x 30"	\$6
_____	Set No. 2 (birds & mammals — 4 charts) 20"x 30"	6
_____	Set No. 3 (all 8 charts) 11" x 14"	5
_____	GAME NEWS Binders	5

SPORT Items

Show your support for the Sportsmen Policing Our Ranks Together program.

_____	Bronze SPORT Tie-Tack/Lapel Pin	\$3.50
_____	SPORT Patch	1.00
_____	SPORT Hat (one size fits all)	4.00
_____	Turkey Alert Band	3.00

Waterfowl Management Stamps

Voluntary waterfowl management stamps provide vital funding for wetland acquisition and management. Each stamp is available for a three-year period only.

_____	1992 — Canada Goose by Bob Sopchick	\$5.50
_____	1991 — Wigeon by Gerald Putt	5.50

Miscellaneous Patches

Help promote the Commission's wildlife conservation programs with these handsome patches.

_____	"We Need Wildlife" Cardinal	\$3
_____	Pymatuning Wildlife Management Area	2
_____	Middle Creek Wildlife Management Area	2

Mail orders along with remittance (do not send cash) to:
PA Game Commission
Dept. MS
2001 Elmerton Ave.
Harrisburg, PA 17110-9797

Prices include tax and delivery. Checks should be made payable to Pennsylvania Game Commission. U.S. currency only.

Hummingbirds

I HAVE DECIDED that hummingbirds don't so much feed as refuel. Cardinals, chickadees and goldfinches stop by my feeder for sedate lunches or midday snacks, but hummers are like jet fighters taking on fuel in mid-flight. Too busy, no time, must go. They hover for an instant, wings ablur, get a high energy boost, then buzz off on fast burn. Zooooom!

I'm glad for hummingbirds because they come at a time between spring and fall hunting seasons and long before winter backyard bird feeding. They make wildlife watching as easy as lazing on the porch on a hot summer day.

But keep your head down, especially if the front porch has five blooming fuscias in hanging baskets and two hummingbird feeders. The airspace around the porch becomes Kennedy Airport at rush hour with an air traffic controllers' strike. Or World War I on a smaller, less lethal scale — aerial dogfights over No Man's Land, Sopwith Camels and the Red Baron.

Into the middle of the melee, several two-legged noncombatants have blundered. They think they'll find peace and quiet. Ha!

This avian air show is enjoyable if you know what is happening and trust the unerring accuracy of the fliers. But if you are an unsuspecting, uninformed visitor, the first impulse is to duck, then swat.

Whyswat? Because hummingbirds sound like overgrown bees. Instinctive fear warns that the huge bee has a stinger to match, so you slap at thin air. You feel a little silly to find a small bird hovering overhead, with serious bright eyes that seem to confirm your embarrassment.

Hummingbirds, in my experience, seem curious about those who wander into their flight paths. They zip in close and pause mid-air, wings whirring, to check you out. They're quite fearless for their penny-weight size, and undoubtedly trust to superior speed for a getaway. Children especially enjoy

being the subject of hummers' aerial reconnaissance, but their inevitable giggles speed the birds back to a safe haven or hangar.

It seems normal for a hummingbird to be on the wing but strange for them to be at rest. Perched, hummers look odd, although more birdlike: They're really made of feathers, not airplane metal; have wings, not engines; and take on nectar, not jet propellant.

The only reason I can inspect them closely is because my hummingbird feeder has plastic perches. Even then the birds are never still, always craning their necks like doughboys in a foxhole watching for strafing runs from above.

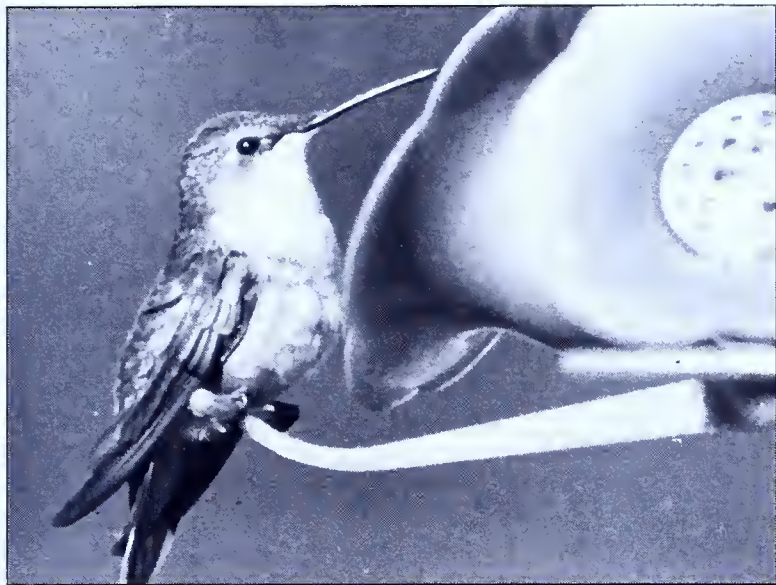
They're not often disappointed. Hummingbirds are highly territorial. One male claimed my backyard feeder and stood watch on a bare branch nearby. He barred other hummingbirds from trespassing, darting down and twittering fiercely.

Some invading birds flew in pairs, a good tactic because the guard could pursue only one at a time. Others would sneak through the back porch to hide on the far side of the feeder, or slip in for a quick sip while he was off post.

Last summer, I witnessed a knock-down battle between a male and female. She buzzed in with several of her brood. The defending male flew in to chase the group away, and she and he thrashed it out, breast to breast, beak to beak, wing to wing, chattering the whole way to the ground.

Another View...

by Linda Steiner



Hummingbirds seem too fragile to migrate to and from South America, survive unseasonably cold snaps or violent summer thunderstorms.

When they got airborne again, he sat on the branch and let the family feed. Though he'd hover nearby and bluff, I never saw him seriously try to rout them again.

Hummingbird flight maneuvers aren't always aggressive. They can be a bit of lovemaking. As part of its courtship, the vermilion-throated male bird executes a fast, swooping arc that would make the Blue Angels proud. Up into the air he goes, then down within inches of flower bed or bush, then skyward again, tracing a huge, invisible letter "J."

A female bird will sit just below, and if you look close, she even ducks when the dive bomber gets close. This is the hummingbird's answer to the gobbler's booming call and the woodcock's flight dance.

When hummingbirds put on the speed, it seems nothing can catch them. Yet I know at least one hawk that did. I saw it nab a hummingbird that had just left my feeder and was winging low over the yard. The sharp-shinned hawk dropped from above, a flash of wings and talons, striking the tiny flier in mid-flight and tumbling it.

The hawk swerved, turned over and, in a fraction of the time it takes to tell, retrieved the falling hummingbird before it could hit the ground. As I stood by the window, dumbfounded, another hummingbird flew in to drink. There was evidently

no significant diminishment of the neighborhood hummingbird population by a hawk having caught its dinner.

The size of a hummingbird belies its resilience. Hummers seem too fragile to migrate to and from South America, survive unseasonably cold snaps or violent summer thunderstorms.

Here in the eastern United States, we have only one species — the ruby-throated — but there are many others southern and tropical types.

The hummingbird's nectar feeding habits are bizarre when compared to the "sensible" fruit, seed and insect eating preference of "normal" birds. Its nest is lilliputian, like the work of elves, incorporating lichens and spider webs, and holding eggs impossibly small. Most of us are accustomed to using binoculars, not a magnifying glass, when bird watching.

If you'd like a closer look at the strange, speedy world of the hummingbird, buy a feeder. I use commercially prepared nectar mixes and have opted lately for those with reduced coloring. The bright red of the feeder itself will draw the birds without adding artificial ingredients.

Replace the sugar/water mixture about once a week, although when the birds are at full throttle they'll empty it more often for you. To alleviate territorial battles, I hang four feeders, two at opposite ends of my big

front porch, one on the back porch, and one at the far side of the woodshed. I've been contemplating purchasing another.

Sweet-seeking ants are a problem at hummingbird feeders. Try attaching the feeder to something more baffling to the insects than a straight post, which they will quickly climb. If you have no choice, wrapping sticky fly paper around the post can help. Bees and wasps will also go after the sugary liquid, so use a feeder with bee guards. The birds will still be able to stick their beaks through the guard's grating.

Flowers that are red or have a long throat will attract hummingbirds. Hummingbirds visit my hanging fuchsia baskets, garden petunias, trumpet vine, apple blossoms, azaleas and rhododendron.

They also like wild plants such as honeysuckle, bee balm, jewel weed, cardinal flower, wild crabapple and other nectar-filled blossoms. Many native wildflowers are now available from commercial greenhouses or mail order catalogs. Plant a variety for the little zoomers — and then get ready to duck.

Fun Games

Summer Beauties

By Connie Mertz

Match the statements with the correct species of butterflies or moths below.

____ I am a common butterfly colored in orange and black. Bordering my wings are orange or white spots. You can find my caterpillar feeding on milkweeds.

____ I am the largest North American moth, with a wingspan of over five inches. I am mostly brown with white and red-orange bands. Even my large body is striped red-orange tinged with white. I emerge from a large brown papery cocoon.

____ I am a black and yellow butterfly. My forewings have a double row of yellow spots. In the caterpillar stage, I am green and black with golden spots, and I like to feed on plants in the carrot family.

____ I am a velvety brown butterfly etched in white and blue spots around the outside of my wings. As a caterpillar, I feed on elm, willow and poplar trees.

____ I am a beautiful light green moth. My hind wings have long tails. In the caterpillar stage, I am found on trees such as hickory, walnut and persimmon.

____ It's not my wing patterns which identify me; it's my flight. My wings produce a buzzing sound as I hover over flowers. I resemble a bird by the same name.

____ I have striped pastel colors of pink and green on my wings. I also have a fuzzy yellow body. I relish red and silver maple foliage while a caterpillar. In fact, I am sometimes called the "Green Striped Maple Worm."

- A. Mourning Cloak
- B. Rosy Moth
- C. Hummingbird Moth
- D. Monarch Butterfly
- E. Luna Moth
- F. Cecropia
- G. Eastern Black Swallowtail

answers on p. 64

Thieves respect property. They merely wish the property to become their property that they may more perfectly respect it.
— G.K. Chesterton

AS THE TURKEYS busily picked their way along the sidehill, they never noticed him. Crouched low, the man trained his rifle on the biggest bird and the gun cracked with a thundering blast. A 20-pound turkey fluttered desperately. As the remaining birds scattered, the poacher fired again, killing another.

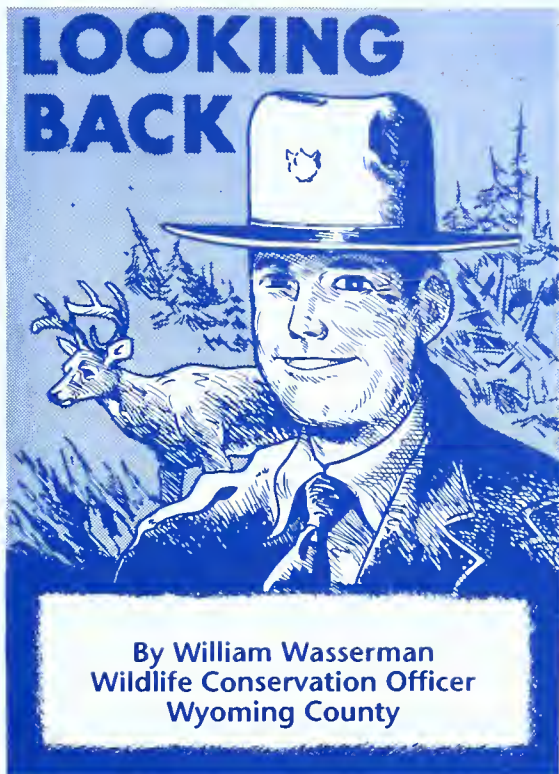
Jethro Crowe then crept from the brush that had so effectively concealed him and retrieved the turkeys. It was early March, snow still on the mountain; spring gobbler season was more than six weeks away. But Crowe didn't concern himself with seasons or limits. Nor did he concern himself about trespassing on posted land.

Back on his ATV and bouncing through the snow toward home, Crowe had no idea he was being followed. The landowner's son had heard two shots, and upon investigation he found a set of boot prints. The tracks, he could tell, were left by a large person. The trail was easy to follow, and while Crowe was home stashing his kill the tracker was already working his way down the mountain toward him. . . .

When WCO Don Burchell was dispatched to investigate the case, I radioed to ask if he wanted help. We met along a rural dirt road just over the county line, in front of Crowe's trailer, and he filled me in on the case. Don knew the landowner's son and said his credibility was excellent.

Burchell and I approached the trailer and knocked. When no one answered, we checked with the neighbors to see if they had seen him that morning. They hadn't, but we left wondering if they were afraid to tell us anything.

We next walked behind his trailer and found a parked ATV. Don noticed some blood on the fender and then a



turkey breast feather on the floorboard. Then, looking behind me, he said, "Let's check that outbuilding back there. Maybe somebody is inside."

The building was about 6-feet square, constructed of wood. A large window next to the door showed a single room used as a work shed. Tools hung from the wall over a sturdy, handmade bench. And lying in a corner were the severed feet of two turkeys. "That's enough evidence," Don said. "Let's go back to the trailer and wait for him."

We turned to leave, but Don veered off. "See something?" I asked.

"Not yet," he said. "But I have a hunch."

We headed toward a large, charred brushpile, Don gazing at it as we approached. "There. See it?"

I looked where he was pointing and saw the blackened head of a turkey. A closer inspection revealed the charred heads, skins and feathers of two turkeys.

"Those birds must be in his trailer," I said.

Don nodded. "We'll wait for awhile;

it's still early. If he doesn't show up, we'll get a search warrant."

We waited in the driveway for only a few minutes when a woman driving a compact car pulled in. Rolling down her window she asked, "Can I help you?"

"Do you live here?" asked Don.

"Yes."

"We're investigating a possible game law violation. Do you have some identification?"

"Why, yes, officer. But I haven't been hunting."

"Are you Mrs. Crowe?"

"Yes," she said. And, opening her purse, she handed Don her driver's license.

Don wrote her name and address in a notepad and handed her license back.

"Who owns the ATV?"

The woman turned briefly. "My husband. Would you please tell me what this is all about?"

"Yes ma'am," Don said. "We think your husband killed two turkeys this morning. We found blood and feathers on the ATV, and we think the turkeys are in your house. We'd like to take a look." Don didn't mention the outbuilding or the brushpile.

"Oh," she gasped. "Well, my husband isn't here, and he might not like you looking around. Can you wait till he comes back?"

"When would that be?" Don asked.

"Probably around five o'clock. He went to New Jersey for a job."

"I don't think we can wait six hours."

"Oh, this is terrible," the woman sighed. "I don't know what to do."

I sensed that her growing dismay was not of us, but of what might happen to her husband if she let us in. It was all too familiar: A person's thoughtless and often reckless behavior causing embarrassment, even hardship, for his or her family. I suspected this wasn't the first time the woman had been in this position.

"Look, ma'am," I said. "If you feel there might be a problem with us coming inside, you could go in and bring the turkeys out."

"I'm really upset," she murmured. "I'm going to call my father." But, unsure in spite of her sudden forcefulness, she stood there, her eyes anxiously awaiting our permission. Finally, she turned and walked inside.

We decided to wait, rather than go for a search warrant, hoping her father would convince her to cooperate. The charred turkey parts we'd seen were certainly admissible in court because we had found them incidentally while looking for Crowe. We wanted to search the trailer, though, because if we found any meat it would practically clinch our case.

Before long a pickup came up the dirt road and pulled into Crowe's driveway. The driver, a man in his late 40s with thick, salt-and-pepper hair, walked over and introduced himself as Mrs. Crowe's father. "What seems to be the problem?" he asked.

Don filled him in on the investigation. He said we were prepared to obtain a search warrant but would prefer his daughter's permission. He also explained that her cooperation would be taken into consideration if a prosecution was forthcoming.

Her father seemed to ponder what he had just been told and then said, "Let me talk to her. She was upset when she called me a few minutes ago."

Once again Don and I found ourselves waiting — and it was really getting old. More than a half-hour passed. Then, without a word, the woman's father came out of the trailer, got back into his pickup and drove slowly away.

Don and I returned to the trailer. Crowe's wife came to the door, her eyes red and puffy. "You'll just have to get a search warrant," she said.

"I see," Don replied. "Officer Wasserman is going to stay here. You'll have to remain on your property until I return."

Though it took three hours to get the warrant, the district attorney was cooperative. He authorized us to search outbuildings, vehicles and the trailer,

and seize all guns, ammunition and wildlife found.

Before entering, I radioed the Game Commission region office and informed dispatcher Barney Dobinick that we were about to search Crowe's trailer. Dobinick, a police officer as well as a dispatcher for the Commission, asked if we wanted backup. I said we could handle the search but that we'd need a truck of some sort to haul away Crowe's ATV.

"I'll be off duty soon," Barney replied. "I'll be there with my pickup in about 30 minutes."

Don and I gathered the turkey parts we had discovered in the workshed and brushpile, then showed Crowe's wife the warrant. "We'd like you to accompany us as we search the house," said Don.

Checking the refrigerator first, we found a turkey soaking in a pot of water on the top shelf. Don removed it, draining the water into a sink. "Where does your husband keep his guns?" he asked.

"In the back room," Crowe's wife said dully. Don and I walked down a narrow hall to a doorway covered by a plastic curtain. Inside we found a collection of rifles, shotguns, knives and various hunting clothes and equipment. Each firearm was checked. All were clean but one — a .243 Winchester. It smelled freshly fired and the bore contained residue.

We seized the rifle for evidence but, needing ammunition for ballistic tests, I began opening drawers of a nearby dresser. The bottom one was packed full of cartridges boxes . . . and something unexpected. I looked up at Don. "There's marijuana in here."

"Oh no!" gasped Crowe's wife. "It can't be. My husband would never use drugs."

"I don't know, ma'am. It looks like marijuana to me," I said. I then went outside to radio the police while Don continued searching the trailer.

A township patrolman soon arrived, and as I told him about our investigation and the suspected marijuana, a beat-up pickup roared into the driveway. It was Crowe.

He screeched to a halt, jumped out and stomped toward us. He was well over six feet tall with broad shoulders and ragged blonde hair. His lips were curled in an ugly snarl as he exclaimed, "What's this all about?"

"I'm a state conservation officer, he's a township police officer," I said, nodding at the patrolman. "We're conducting a search of your house."

"You're what?" he barked.

"Two turkeys were killed and transported on your ATV today . . ."

"This is a bunch of *#@!" he shouted, cutting me off. Then his look turned dark and his stubby fingers curled into a meaty fist. A physical confrontation was imminent.

The right words can be an officer's best defense, but finding those words can be difficult, especially in the heat of the moment. In this case, it was perhaps impossible. What could I say that would bring an irate, 6-2, 220-pound, violator to his senses? There had to be something.

"Your wife's really upset about the marijuana," I snapped.

"Huh?"

He looked toward the trailer, his shoulders sagged. Then he turned, eyes

Commission 800 Numbers

Within Pennsylvania, use the agency's toll-free 800 numbers to contact a wildlife conservation officer. For the Northwest Region, call (800) 533-6764; Southwest, (800) 243-8519; Northcentral, (800) 422-7551; Southcentral, (800) 422-7554; Northeast, (800) 228-0789; and Southeast (800) 228-0791. Phones will be manned around the clock during the major hunting seasons, and about 15 hours a day at other times.

blazing. "You scum," he muttered, and stomped inside.

The patrolman and I followed. Don had opened a chest freezer and piled its contents on a card table. All frozen game. Each package wrapped and marked, even noting the date the animals were killed. The second turkey was there. Don had it aside.

"Jethro," gasped his wife when she saw him, "these men think they found marijuana." She had resigned herself to the fact her husband was a poacher, but the possibility of illegal drugs in her house was overwhelming.

"That's not marijuana. It's hay."

His wife looked bewildered. "What kind of hay?"

"Some kind of alfalfa."

"Well, we're going to have it tested just the same," I said.

Crowe glared at me coldly. "Suit yourself," he grumbled. His wife shook her head in weary disbelief.

I saw Dobinick's truck pulling into the driveway and walked out to meet him while Don and the patrolman watched Crowe.

Barney open his tailgate and pulled out two heavy planks, running them from the truck bed to the ground for a ramp.

"Ready," he said. "Where's the ATV?"

"Around back."

"Got the key?"

"That'd help, wouldn't it?" I said with a smile. "Be right back."

I walked into the trailer. "We need the key to your ATV," I told Crowe.

"Wait a minute, man. You ain't taking that!"

"Afraid so."

"What for?"

"It's evidence."

"I'm not giving you any key, and you ain't taking my quad!" he bellowed.

"We have a search warrant. If you try

to stop us from securing evidence, or continue to interfere, we're going to place you under arrest and take you to jail. Now hand over the key," I demanded.

Crowe thought for a moment, his icy glare gradually softening. He scratched his head, then dug both hands into his pockets and fished around. "I don't have the key," he said.

"Where is it?"

"I don't know. Must have lost it."

"Okay," I said, "we'll manage." I motioned to Don and the patrolman, and we walked out to Barney's truck.

"No key," I said. "There's four of us, let's just push it up the ramp."

Suddenly I heard Crowe's ATV roar to life. "He's taking off!" I yelled and started toward the back of the trailer.

But Crowe came barreling around the corner, right toward us, the front of his ATV high off the ground. He slammed up the ramp into the bed of the truck and shut off the engine, leaving the key in the switch. Then he jumped to the ground. "Didn't want you to scratch it," he sneered.

Crowe paid a \$400 fine for killing two turkeys in closed season, and lost his privilege to hunt and trap in Pennsylvania for three years. The township police handled the marijuana investigation.

The following year, WCO Burchell and I investigated a report that Crowe had killed a deer in closed season. We believe he did, but no one would testify. We also received numerous reports that Crowe continued to hunt during his revocation period. The information was always late, the informants always nameless and unwilling to testify.

Every wildlife conservation officer has what can be called "steady customers," and as I'll cover in an upcoming column, Crowe and his family are some of mine.

Degenerate Wildflowers

DURING our first 13 years on the mountain I found only one so-called parasitic wildflower, the waxy-white Indian pipe that thrives in the dense shade of an August woods. Then in 1984 my luck

By Marcia Bonta

changed. Over the next six years I discovered four more parasitic species and watched their fortunes wax and wane according to both the imponderability of nature and change wrought by humans.

Unlike most plants, parasitic plants do not have any chlorophyll: They can't photosynthesize — use the sun's energy, along with water and carbon dioxide, to make carbohydrates. Instead, they take their energy from a host plant that they penetrate with modified roots or stems. Then they suck out and absorb their host's nutrient-rich sap, causing severe harm and sometimes even death to the host plant.

My first discovery occurred during early September on the moss-covered Guest House Trail. One day the trail was an unbroken green carpet. The next it was covered with what looked like red and gold Indian pipes, only instead of one pipe to a stem there were several. I counted 63 individual plants in that one patch. But although I searched through the rest of the woods, I couldn't find another colony. What were they and where had they come from?

Later, I consulted my trusty Peterson & McKenny *Field Guide to Wildflowers* and identified them as pinesaps (*Monotropa hypopitys*). As I suspected, they were closely related to the Indian pipes (*Monotropa uniflora*)

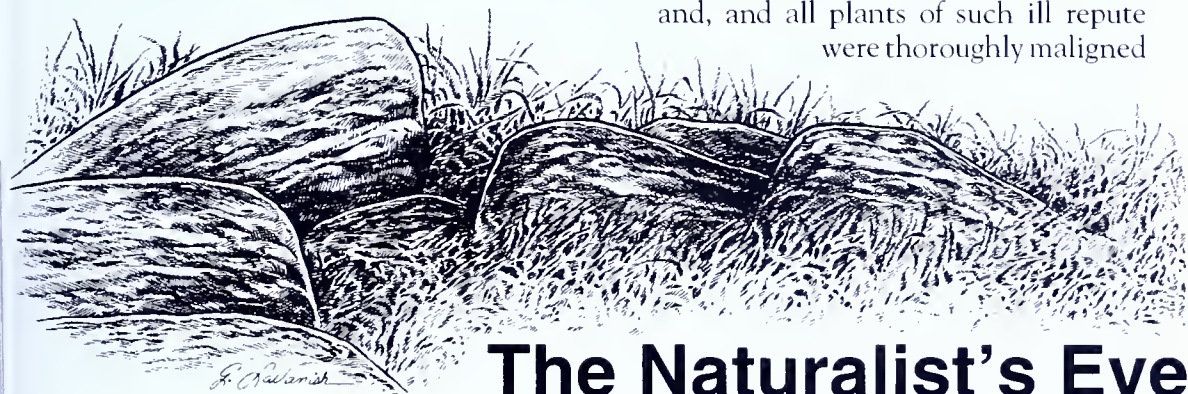
of midsummer's dark woods. Some botanists have even put the two species in their own family — *Monotropaceae* — while others place them in the wintergreen family, *Pyroloaceae*, along with pipsissewa and pyrola.

Monotropa is derived from the Greek meaning "having a single turn." The name is appropriate because the stems of pinesaps and Indian pipes are turned to one side, causing the pipes to nod.

The *uniflora* of Indian pipes means "one flower," referring to the single pipe, while the *hypopitys* of pinesaps is translated as "under a pine or fir." That is because pinesaps were first discovered, and named, in northern Europe where the forests are mostly coniferous. Here in the eastern United States, pinesaps are more likely to grow in the humus of hardwood forests.

Like pinesaps, Indian pipes are not unique to North America either. They can be found in eastern Asia as well. Once both species are pollinated, the pipes turn skyward and the plants blacken.

Because they lack chlorophyll, both species had long been considered parasitic, and, and all plants of such ill repute were thoroughly maligned



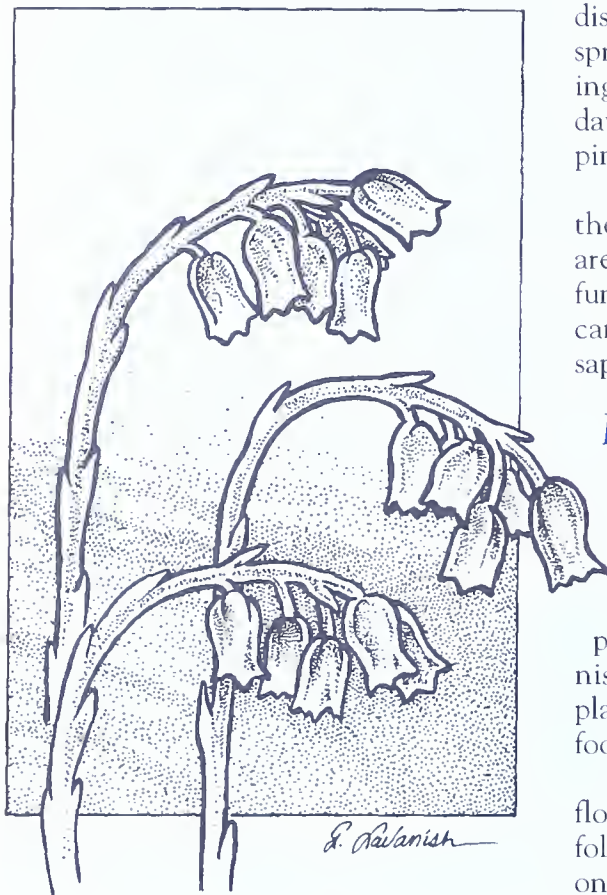
The Naturalist's Eye

by earlier naturalists, such as Neltje Blanchan, who equated their “lazy” ways with “sin.”

In her 1916 *Wild Flowers* volume for the New Nature Library, Blanchan called them “degenerates” and “sinners,” and she claimed that “among their race [they were] branded with the mark of crime as surely as was Cain” because they “live by piracy, to drain the already digested food of its neighbors. . . . No wonder this degenerate hangs its head; no wonder it grows black with shame on being picked, as if its wickedness were only just then discovered.”

Such purple prose, while entertaining, later proved inaccurate when botanists upgraded both species to saprophytes. Instead of sapping nutrients from living plants as parasites do, saprophytes live on dead or decaying matter — absorbing carbohydrates directly from the soil just as certain fungi and bacteria do.

Then scientists noticed that the roots of pinesaps are encased in a layer of fungus.



Perhaps, they thought, the plants were using the fungus to help them absorb the carbohydrates: Although pinesap seeds will germinate, they will not grow until the fungus is on their roots.

But Erik Bjorkman of the Royal School of Forestry in Stockholm questioned that theory. He knew that that particular species of fungus is not able to absorb the kinds of nutrients pinesaps need to grow as rapidly as they do — from underground corms (similar to buds or bulbs) to full development within a week. He also noticed nearby trees have their roots encased in the same fungus that encases the pinesaps. He wondered whether there was a connection between pinesap roots and those of the trees.

To find out, he put cylinders of sheet metal around clumps of pinesaps. He pounded the cylinders deep into the earth, severing the pinesap roots from those of the neighboring trees.

The following year the isolated pinesaps had very weak growth, compared to the vigorous growth of those that had not been disturbed. Bjorkman then injected nearby spruce and pine trees with glucose containing radioactive carbon 14 as a tracer. Five days later the stems of the undisturbed pinesaps also had radioactive glucose.

Further experiments demonstrated that the roots of pinesaps and nearby tree roots are not directly connected, but rather the fungus is a nutrient bridge over which carbohydrates in the trees travel to pinesaps.

Pinesaps

Other nutrients, such as phosphorous, use the same bridge to travel from pinesaps to tree roots. So Bjorkman now calls pinesaps, along with Indian pipes, “epiparasites” on trees. Other botanists say they are probably symbiotic plants — plants that give as well as receive food from other plants.

Having discovered such an unusual wildflower, I eagerly looked for its return the following year, but I was rewarded with only a few plants. Since then there have

been none, either in that spot or any other place on the mountain.

I can only conclude, based on Bjorkman's experiments, that for two years the fungus had created the proper nutrient bridge between pinesaps and nearby trees, but some natural occurrence destroyed it. Presuming that the corms still lurk underneath the soil, waiting for the right fungus connection, someday they may reappear.

One-Flowered Cancer-Root and Beechdrops

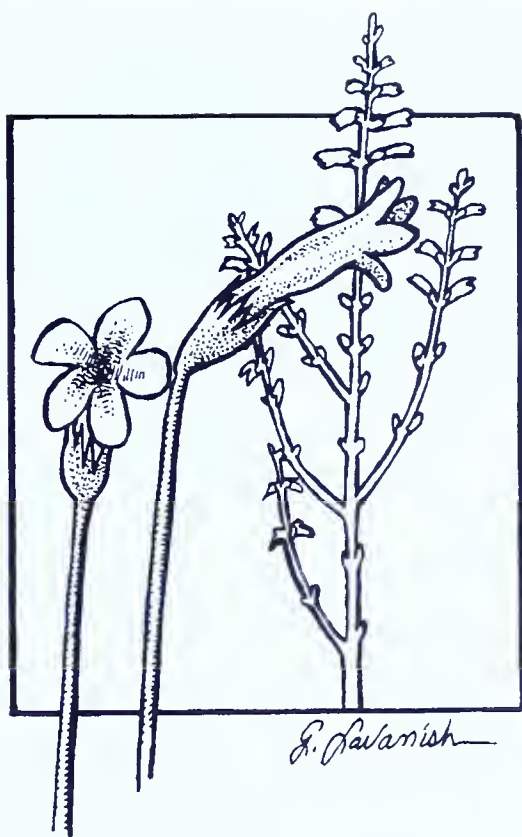
In the meantime, though, I have nurtured my interest in the other "degenerate" wildflowers I have found, all of which are true parasites and members of the *Broomrape* family.

My next discovery, in 1986, was a plant I had been searching for for years. Because we have several huge American beech trees growing along our stream, I was certain that we must also have the parasitic beechdrops — plants that feed directly on beech tree roots.

One late fall afternoon as I walked down the hollow road, the sun shined brightly on the road bank. And suddenly I saw not one clump of beechdrops but dozens, all growing beneath the spindly, beech saplings sprouting from the road bank, not underneath the streamside giants where I expected to find them.

Had they always been there or had they, like the pinesaps, emerged for the first time that autumn because of the right conditions? Unlike the pinesaps, I have found the beechdrops every autumn since then, although some years more than others.

I even located good stands beneath the venerable old trees once I was beechdrop-attuned. Fleshy-tan in color, they blend in well with the understory, so if you don't know what you are looking at, you might mistake them for tree sprouts — especially after they bloom and dry up for the year. Beechdrops, like jewel weeds, violets, wood-sorrel and others, have both cleistogamous flowers that never open but produce many



seeds, and small purplish-striped flowers above them that are sterile.

In early June 1989 I made my third discovery. Like the pinesaps, I stumbled on them without having any idea what they were. Also like pinesaps, they are natives of Europe and they too eventually disappeared after blooming three years underneath the young black locusts on the Far Field hill. They have the inelegant name of one-flowered cancer-root, but even Neltje Blanchan calls them a "beautiful" parasite.

The single, tubular, five-petaled flower is downy white, pale lavender or violet and is supported by a naked, sticky pale stalk. One-flowered cancer-roots grow in clumps of several dozen nestled in heavy undergrowth, and until they disappeared completely, I spent a lot of time trying to locate them each spring.

Again, like pinesaps, I imagine the natural conditions were right for several seasons, and then some change occurred that affected them. Perhaps they too will reappear when nature cooperates.



"We Need Wildlife" is a message more people need to realize and appreciate if the future of our wildlife resources is to be ensured. To help promote that theme, the Game Commission has produced a new patch featuring a cardinal resting on a dogwood sprig. The 3-inch full color patch costs \$3 each, delivered, and may be ordered from the Pennsylvania Game Commission, Dept. MS, 2001 Elmerton Ave., Harrisburg, PA 17110-9797.

Not so my last discovery, at least not in my lifetime. The neighboring property, once protected by its tenant, had some of the oldest red oak trees on the mountain. In May 1991 I found growing there literally thousands of squawroots, parasitics on the roots of the old oak trees.

These unusual wildflowers have stalks and scaly leaves that look like upright yellow-brown pine cones, hence their ge-

nus name *Conopholis*, which is Greek for "cone scale." Each stalk supports an attractive spike of lipped and hooded yellowish flowers. I spent many hours and days admiring them and had my husband take slides of what I was almost certain was the last spring of their lives.

And so it was. That autumn the owner of the property had all the trees cut, and the following spring not even one squawroot could be found. It will take more than what is left of my lifetime to grow another red oak forest and, presumably, another population of squawroots.

Instead, during August, I comfort myself with the ubiquitous, but intriguing Indian pipes, "colorless in every part, waxy, cold, and clammy, rising like a company of wraiths in the dim forest that suits them well," as Blanchan wrote.

Indian pipes have also been called "ice plant," "ghost flower," "convulsion-root," "fairy smoke" and "corpse plant." Early settlers used the clear juice extracted from the crushed skin of Indian pipes to cure eye problems. Herbalist John Lust in *The Herb Book* claims their roots make "a good remedy for spasms, fainting spells, and various nervous conditions."

But even the Indian pipes failed me during the drought of 1988. As far as I could tell, not one germinated on our mountain that rainless summer. They were back the following year in larger numbers than ever, however, which gives me hope for all the other parasitics that have come and gone over the years.

Cover painting by Marie Girio Brummett

Nothing stirs the blood of a dedicated hunter like the sight of two fine sporting dogs coursing the fields in search of game. Featured here are two Weimaraners, a continental breed that not only points but will — like the German shorthair — also retrieve. Weimaraners were first brought to this country in the late 1920s and have enjoyed a fair degree of popularity since World War II. Typically, the dogs run about 24 inches in height and weigh up to 70 or so pounds. Fine art prints of this month's cover are available from the artist. The edition is limited to 300 signed and numbered prints, each reproduced on acid free paper and measuring 16 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 23 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches overall; the image size is 12 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 19. The prints are \$74.20 each, delivered, and may be ordered from the artist at 2039 Spring St., York, PA 17404.

Greener Grass?

By Keith C. Schuyler

WHILE PENNSYLVANIA certainly offers a lot to big game bowhunters — including the six-week fall archery deer season instituted this year — quite a few archers still look for hunting opportunities across the state's borders. Some go in search of different or exotic game; others like to keep hunting after they've filled their tags here.

There's nothing wrong with hunting in other states or countries. But for many types of hunts you'll likely be paying a small fortune, and while there's always the possibility the trip that may bring the thrill of a lifetime, it may also be a complete bust.

Not long ago, in many states and provinces, bowhunters were regarded as a minor element whose biggest value was in carrying home tales of huge animals for the gunning trade. Nonresident fees were nominal. I remember hunting in New York when an archery tag was only \$10; in Colorado, a deer tag and an elk license for archers was \$25 each. The license fee was a small part of the total cost for a hunt across the border.

That's hardly the case today, though. A New York basic permit is \$81, and an archery tag is \$11 extra. The year after my last Colorado hunt, the deer license went to \$150.25, bow or gun. For elk, the tab now is \$250.25, bow or gun.

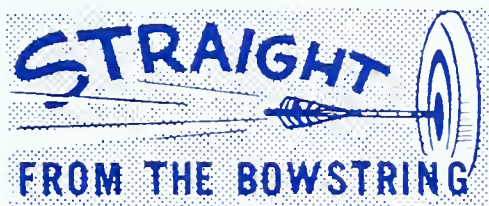
And even those prices are a drop in the bucket compared to what it costs in license fees to go for something big or more difficult to come by. For example, just to shoot a whitetail in Alberta province, noted for big deer, the basic license is \$199 plus \$21.98 for an archery tag that allows you to take a whitetail and a mule deer.



HUNTING IN other states gives archers — as well as all other types of hunters — a chance to expand their hunting seasons and hunt for game not found here. A hunter who wants to travel would be smart to do some homework before planning a trip.

In addition to a \$280 license and an \$11 habitat certificate to shoot one or two deer of either sex, depending upon where you hunt, Saskatchewan requires you to have a professional guide, who you pay for. Quebec will entertain you for a \$155.49 archery license to shoot one deer — except on Anticosti Island where two of either sex may be taken, for a price.

A number of years ago I had an invitation to hunt Anticosti when the island was all privately owned, but the owners wouldn't



permit bowhunting. I passed on that one. Today, however, archers are welcome.

Some of these prices I'm quoting are up to two years old, so if you're seriously considering a hunt in another state or province, check the fees. If your hunt is in Canada, U.S. funds will provide a considerable discount, depending on the currency exchange rate.

If you're interested in bear hunting, for a relatively modest cash outlay you can drive to Maine or Quebec and find pretty good chances of getting some action. But if you want to go first class for the rarer or larger big game species, be prepared to pay what by nearly anybody's standards is a lot of money.

One commercial outfit advertises a 14-day Dall sheep hunt in the Yukon for \$7,325. Additional animals can be hunted on a fee basis: moose, \$1,000; caribou, \$1,000; grizzly, \$2,500; black bear, \$500. Or, you can hunt caribou or moose at \$5,280 for 10 days. You can hunt British Columbia for 12 days at \$11,000. In Arizona, a seven-day coues deer hunt is available for \$2,500, and bowhunters can hunt for javelina for free if they score early on deer.

You can shave these prices considerably

by setting up your own trip. But you take your chances of blowing a real wad of money with questionable prospects of success. There are sharpies in the hunting business as elsewhere.

If your desire is to take exotic game, there are plenty of opportunities. You can shoot a Russian brown bear on the Kamchatka Peninsula for \$8,800 and tag a second one for a mere \$4,500. Travel expense is not included. Or you can take a 14-day African safari out of Paris for \$36,000 — and trophy fees are "very low."

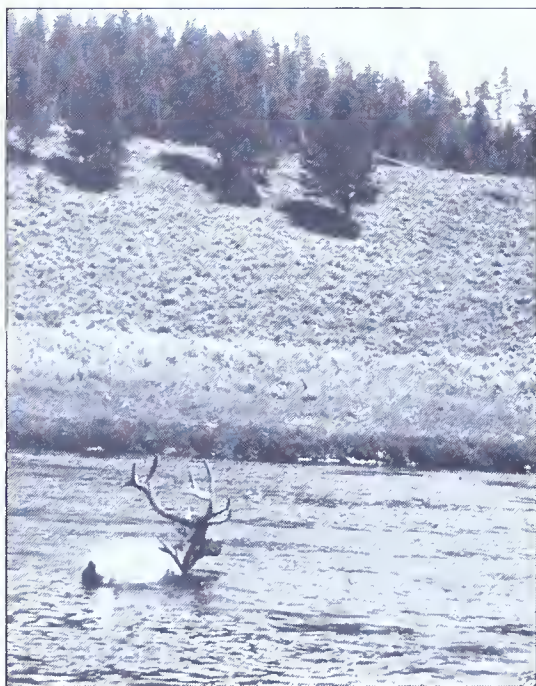
When planning an out-of-state hunt, it's important to look beyond the cost of licenses. Most states offer deer hunting without too many complications, although it may be necessary to apply for licenses (and in some cases specific hunting areas) well in advance.

If you plan to book a hunt, try to find someone who has been to the area who can give you an idea of what to expect in the way of accommodations and game. Most good outfitters have plenty of business through referrals, so they don't have to advertise. Of course, everybody has to start somewhere, and a first-timer in the hunting business may be looking for customers.

Over the years I've enjoyed some great hunts and others that weren't so great. What I probably consider my worst hunt occurred in Colorado. A group of nearly 20 other experienced bowhunters and I were trying to help a new outfitter get off to a good start. On the first morning, the head man forgot the keys to a gate, and we wound up hunting a foothill that may have never seen a deer or an elk.

The cook's idea of a breakfast for hungry hunters was a bowl of cereal (I think we were permitted seconds). The outfitter would leave us for hours at a time back in the hills with a promise to return shortly.

ELK have become extremely popular big game animals. On the verge of extinction at the turn of the century, elk have staged dramatic comebacks in many western states, thanks to sound wildlife management practices. Today, sportsmen enjoy long seasons and good hunting.



We finally set up our own drives and had much better luck at seeing game.

On one organized drive of over a mile we discovered that the standers had been taken through the same area on the way to their posts. The only shot was taken by a guide. Our total game for the week was one mule deer doe and one cow elk. In all fairness, I should say that one of my best out-of-state hunts was also in Colorado, although I didn't score on that one either.

It has been my good fortune to bowhunt at least once in 11 states, from New Jersey to Hawaii, and in the Canadian provinces of Ontario and Quebec. Some trips were by invitation; most were planned with friends. All were enjoyable.

If you decide to rough it on your own, be sure to contact the state or provincial game department well in advance. In addition to license fees, ask about camping regulations, hunter education requirements, access to private land, laws and regulations.

Bowhunters will find that going after the various species of deer, as well as elk, bear, javelina and feral pigs, is fairly easy. In fact, because you're already committed to the basic travel expense, you might want to try hunting for several species if time and finances permit. Check in advance to determine if you must pay a trophy fee or other costs. For example, you can buy a 12-day hunt for a California bighorn sheep for \$5,000, but you pay an extra \$1,500 as a trophy fee.

If you plan to fly, a good travel agent can keep you abreast of special rates. You'll likely have to pay well in advance and stick with the flight schedule. Any change will probably cost you the regular fare.

As an aside, if you want to bring meat home with you on the plane, pack it well in dry ice. For the best deal, compare prices on shipping by freight with those for excess airline baggage.

If your choice is to drive with one or more companions, plan carefully for voyages west or north. Trips into Canada may be a combination of driving and flying, depending upon how far north you go and what game you're after.



THE JAVELINA, or collared peccary, is the nearest thing to a wild pig in North America, not that the two are very closely related. Javelinas are found in the desert country of the Southwest, and outdoorsmen often hunt them in conjunction with other game.

Some hunters prefer to drive long distances by stopping only long enough for fuel and to change drivers. Such trips can be a real grind, especially if they reach a couple thousand miles or so. Driving the same distance back home is likely to be even more grueling after a week or two of hard hunting and the attendant lack of sleep and rest. To each his own. I've done it both ways, and consider the cost of accommodations a small price to pay for their benefit.

Many archers are tempted to take a gun, too, but if you are a dedicated bowhunter, I don't advise it. More than one hunter has told me about giving up on the bow after a few days and then getting a shot with the gun that would have been ideal for an arrow. (Travelers' warning: Canada does not allow handguns into the country for any reason, and a person must obtain a permit to bring in a long gun. Other countries may have additional restrictions and regulations.)

By all means, though, do take an extra bow, one properly set up in the event one gets broken. One time in Quebec a guide stepped on my recurve. Fortunately, there was no damage or my caribou hunt would have ended right there; I had no spare.

Proper preparation is paramount. The cost of a sojourn to another state or country can add up to considerable or a once-in-a-

lifetime investment, and you want everything going your way.

I recall one time sitting around a potbelled stove on the George River in Quebec wondering when we might get home. A strong wind was blowing snow around the cabin, and even the chief guide was shaking his head. Luck was with us, however, and the float plane arrived on schedule.

At another time, a moose hunt in Quebec became nothing more than a canoe ride because our Indian guide apparently didn't trust me or the efficacy of the bow and arrow. On the fly-in I saw good sign all over, and I suspected moose were spending the days on one particular small wooded hill and following our canoe trails at night. But I couldn't get the guide to listen to my hunches. Stories he told of being charged by bull moose on two occasions might have had something to do with it.

On the last day I finally talked him into checking the hill, and the area was like a barn yard. In fact, we thought we heard a moose move out ahead of us.

I certainly don't mean to discourage anyone from venturing to another state or even abroad to supplement his bowhunting experiences. But in looking at what other places offer bowhunters, Pennsylvania stands out as an excellent bargain.

The cost of a basic adult hunting license here is \$12.75, and an archery license necessary for bowhunting deer is another \$5.75. The fall archery deer season is now six weeks long, and the last part of the season should coincide with the rut. Bowhunters who still have a tag also get to hunt for deer an additional two weeks after Christmas (even longer on properties designated as Deer Damage Areas; see page 39).

Of course, archers aren't limited to the bowhunting season to enjoy their sport. Woodchucks are open year round, and the early small game season begins in mid-October. The basic license also includes two tags for turkeys — one for fall and one for spring. And if it's challenge the hunter is looking for, a \$10.75 license entitles archers and gun hunters to participate in some great black bear hunting.



MOOSE, above, and antelope are two other popular big game animals. Moose, the largest members of the deer family, are found across the northern United States up into Canada. Antelope, which were once nearly extinct, are available in western states, particularly Wyoming.



And there's certainly nothing wrong with picking up your bow during the regular firearms deer seasons; one tag comes with the basic license and antlerless tags sell for just \$5.75. Of course, the costs I've mentioned here apply to residents, but Pennsylvania is a good deal for nonresidents, too.

Anyone can take advantage of these opportunities. You don't need a guide, and there are no trophy fees. It isn't necessary to drive or fly much over 200 miles at maximum; you may be able to walk to the nearest deer, or bear, stand. While there's certainly an allure to hunting exotic locales for big game animals, there is as much challenge to hunting one's own backyard.



Helen Lewis

SPORTING CLAYS has become increasingly popular over the past decade. Unlike trap and skeet, which are shot according to very specific guidelines, sporting clays is designed to offer the same types of unknown challenges faced while hunting. No two courses are exactly alike, and on any given course, shooting stations are changed often.

Sporting Clays

By Don Lewis

"TRAP READY," the shooter called.

"Ready," came the muffled reply.

"Pull," sang the shooter.

A second later, an orange claybird zipped through a cluster of trees and then shattered into falling pieces when the shooter fired.

The commands were repeated, and a single bird, followed closely by a second, sailed straight away from the trap. The first target curved to the ground untouched, but the second burst into a cloud of dust.

The sequence was repeated, and two birds launched from the trap house. The first literally disintegrated when the shooter fired, but the second claybird flew untouched until it hit a tree some 40 yards away.

"Three out of five isn't bad," owner Joe

McCrea told me as the shooter moved to the second position at the first trap.

"This is a little tougher," Joe explained. "He'll get a single, a following pair and a true pair just like he was offered from the No. 1 shooting position. Those were all straightaway shots, however. These are crossing. And because the birds are sent sailing through some fairly large trees, they're even more challenging."

Joe explained that in a following pair



the birds comes from the trap individually, as quickly as the trapper can load and release the birds. In a true pair, the targets are thrown simultaneously.

Joe assured me the action would get even more exciting as we traveled along his half-mile sporting clays course located near Fenelton. It consists of 11 traps and 23 shooting stations. It takes about three hours to shoot the 100-bird course. The operation also has a 50-target shoot.

Increasingly Popular

Sporting clays has become increasingly popular over the past decade or so. Many shooters have found it to be a more enjoyable, relaxing substitute for trap or skeet, which tend to be more competitive. Sporting clays is designed to be a hunter's sport, a fun game.

For example, in trap and skeet the shooter has the option to mount the shotgun before calling for the target, but in sporting clays the shooter may shoulder the gun only when he sees the bird.

Also, sporting clays courses are usually set up where shooters must contend with trees and other natural obstructions, just as they do when hunting. The sport more

closely simulates realistic game shooting.

Sporting clays originated in England in the early 1920s, and in popularity there it ranks above golf and just behind fishing. When it crossed over the ocean to our shores in the early 1980s, it didn't exactly set the world on fire, largely because there was no place to shoot.

But as courses were built and word of the sport spread, popularity has grown, and during the last three or four years, sporting clays has become a widely recognized shooting sport, and new courses are still popping up like mushrooms.

Some of the targets used for sporting clays are much different than those used in trap and skeet. Although the conventional White AA Flyer is used at various stations on McCrea's course, he also uses 60mm mini, 90mm midi, rabbit and battue targets.

To give you an idea of the sizes, a conventional claybird is roughly 4 $\frac{1}{4}$ inches in diameter. The rabbit and battue clays have the same diameter, but the midi is 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches across and the mini is about 2 $\frac{3}{8}$.

Except for size, the flyer, midi and mini look much the same. The battue and rabbit are different. Because the rabbit is rolled on



Helen Lewis

JOE MCCREA, above, demonstrates shooting from his boat. Note the heavy springs designed to simulate waterfowl gunning on choppy water. Jeff Zartman, right, a trapper at Martz's sporting clays course in Northumberland County, releases a "rabbit," seen here bouncing in the lower right corner. Targets such as these are what make sporting clays a challenging sport.



Hal Korber

the ground, it has a half-inch wide rim, and is a lot tougher to withstand the jars and jolts as it bounces out past the shooter. The battue is flat. Viewed edge-on, the battue presents almost no surface area, so it's almost impossible to see. But at some point in its flight, it veers sharply downward, offering the shooter a flashing glimpse of its flat surface.

Sporting clays offers targets going straight up, bouncing along the ground, flying directly at the shooter and directly away, crossing left to right and right to left, and probably every other type of shot imaginable. Furthermore, at every course I'm aware of, trap locations and target paths are moved around and shifted so the shooting is always a little different.

And that brings me to another fundamental difference between sporting clays and trap and skeet. Even though many of the individual shooting stations are similar from range to range, sporting clays courses vary widely because of different terrains and layouts.

No Two Alike

I think it's safe to say that no two are alike. One constant is that the gunner shoots from some type of cage that allows him to see the targets but limits where he can engage them. I'll use Joe's facility to illustrate some of the shots participants might find at a sporting clays course.

At the Springing Teal trap, the targets are thrown straight up. Most shooters try to break the birds when they momentarily

stop at the top of their trajectory. At Joe's range, the round includes a single, following pair and a true pair. At first glance, it seems an easy shot, but it's a little tougher than most shooters think. From what I observed, shooters had most problems with the true pair.

The Back Porch trap has three shooting positions consisting of 11 birds. The No. 1 position gets three right to left passing birds, consisting of a single and following pair.

No. 2 offers five birds going straight away. It starts simple enough with a single and then a following pair. But then Joe throws in a twist; in the last pair, a mini or



J. S. Rupp



J. S. Rupp

SHOOTING from a tower — in this case to mimic a flushing, low-flying dove — is a station featured at many sporting clays courses. At the Thundering Grouse station above, note how barriers limit the areas in which a shooter may shoot, just like trees and other obstacles do in real hunting situations. Shooting cages also function as safety devices, keeping shooters from swinging in unsafe directions.

midi is placed inside the regular flyer. The birds separate a few yards in front of the trap house. Nailing the little fellow is no easy job. At the third station, the shooter is faced with three passing shots from left to right — a single and a following pair.

Another challenging trap at Joe's course is Woodcock Hollow, a three-position, 11-bird trap. The first station gets an overhead passing single then a following pair. On No. 2, gunners shoot from an 8-foot tower at straightaway clays. No. 3 is back on the ground with the shooter taking a level, passing bird.

"On Report"

Fur and Feathers is shot from a single position. It has eight targets that come out in the following order: single rabbit; single bird; pair of rabbits; pair of birds; and a single rabbit followed by a single bird at the crack of the gun (known as "on report"). The shooter has to be ready for the bird because the trapper releases it the instant the shooter fires at the rabbit.

I missed the rabbit and never fired at the bird; it was out and gone before I could collect my senses, let alone take a shot.

Five shooting positions make up the Poison Bird trap. The format calls for three birds at one time — two of the same color and one of a different color. The challenge is to break the two birds of the same color. Hitting the wrong bird cancels the score for that station.

The 20-foot Tower trap has three shooting positions and offers 15 birds — and may also teach a shooter a few new words. The first position offers overhead ducks, including a single, true pair and a pair of midis. Next comes the boat.

The boat is actually a full-size boat set

on large springs. Even the slightest move causes it to rock. I suppose this is an exaggeration, but I thought the recoil made the boat move, and even when I sat as still as possible the boat still rocked like it was on choppy water.

The first bird is an easy sailing single, but then comes a pair with a midi inside the regular clay. It's only natural to go for the big flyer first, but then finding and getting aligned on the midi can raise one's blood pressure. Even a mild mannered guy like me said, "Aw shucks" after I shot at a midi 45 yards away.

And if that isn't bad enough, the battue should be outlawed. The flat design makes it curve down extremely rapidly. I shot twice where both birds would have been if they were normal targets.

To be gracious, and since I was gathering information for this column, the trapper threw me another pair, but either I missed or the shells had no pellets in them. Joe stepped in and broke a couple just to show me it could be done.

The third position at the tower is a timed sequence. The shooter calls for only the first bird. It is a single and is followed by a seven-second interval for reloading. Next comes a following pair with another seven-

SHOOTING AT DOUBLES is one of the most exciting and challenging aspects of sporting clays, perhaps because it's a type of shooting situation not often encountered in the field. Most sporting clays courses offer three types of pairs — following, simultaneous and "on report" — which will no doubt increase a hunter's chances of connecting in the field when those opportunities do arise.



J.S. Rupp

second interval and another following pair. Either I'm slowing down or the trapper cut the reloading interval to three seconds because I barely had time to reload. Again, I dreamed up a few appropriate adjectives to express my frustration.

Space doesn't permit a run-down of all the traps and shooting positions, but I have to mention the Downhill Rabbit. It looks so simple. It has just one position and consists of two following pairs seven seconds apart.

The rabbits roll smoothly down a long strip of conveyor belting on a fairly steep hillside. When they leave the belt, they begin to bounce along the ground, making them next to impossible to hit. Whether the shooter hits any of the targets or not, there's no time to evaluate what happened. Two more rabbits depart the trap house seven seconds after the first two. There's precious little time to reload the shotgun.

Veteran sporting clays shooters will tell you to always shoot low on rabbits. Certainly there's the possibility the target will bounce up right before you shoot, but your chances are better if you shoot underneath them.

Those who pursue sporting clays in the competitive class want special shotguns. For them, several gun manufactures offer a variety of sporting clays guns, running from side-by-sides and over-unders to semis.

Pump guns are not as popular because they are slower to operate. But sporting clays will surely make a slide-action shooter more proficient and improve his field shooting.

The nice part about sporting clays is that any shotgun that handles at least two shells will suffice. Chokes and loads are pretty much up to the shooter. At the majority of courses, a modified or improved cylinder will do the trick. Some ranges restrict loads for safety reasons, but any



Hal Korber

FIVE TYPES of claybirds are used in most sporting clays courses. Left to right, top to bottom, are the 90mm midi and 60mm mini, the conventional flyer, the rabbit and the battue. The difference in dome shape between the battue and midi is shown below. The midi, although only about 3½ inches, flies like a regular target. The battue is extremely thin, making it nearly invisible until it turns on its side.



J.S. Rupp

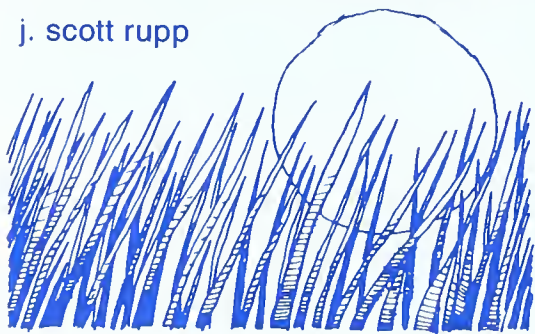
light trap or skeet load will work. Remember, in shotgun shooting it's the swing that counts.

I had fun at Joe's course, and I admire his strict safety policy: ear plugs and eye glasses must be worn while shooting, and gunners are allowed to load their shotguns only after they're in the shooting station.

Sporting clays is designed for hunters, but it's also a fine family-oriented shooting sport. Maybe Joe said it best, "It's frustrating, but it's fun."

In the wind

j. scott rupp



The Netherlands is attempting to reclaim some of the wetlands lost to the dike system that has kept out the North Sea and Rhine River for hundreds of years. *Audubon* reports the nation — which spawned the myth of the little Dutch boy who saved the country by plugging a dike with his finger — would like to have back some of its historical salt marshes, peat bogs and swamp forests. Aside from a desire to restore some of its original landscape, the Netherlands, like other European Community members, is also looking to trim surplus agriculture by 10 percent.

The United States has pledged support for an international agreement intended to protect forests. Media reports indicate the United States, the world's largest importer and second-largest exporter of wood products, has committed itself to sustainable forest management by the year 2000. A sustainable program halts forest depletion by making sure that more trees are grown than are harvested.

Red wolves in Great Smoky Mountain National Park produced their first wild-born litters last April. According to *Defenders*, one wolf pair had four pups and a second pair produced three. The park's population now stands at 16. The red wolf, an endangered species, was first reintroduced to the park in 1991.

British Columbia has designated 2.5 million acres as a provincial park, effectively blocking development of what would have been the world's largest open-pit copper and gold mine. The mine was planned for the watershed of the Tatshenshini and Alsek rivers. The *Washington Post* quoted the Canadian province's premier as saying "the preservation of wilderness and the proposed mining activities could not coexist." Together with parks in the Yukon Territory and the state of Alaska, the region's 21 million parkland acres constitute the world's largest protected area that crosses national boundaries.

The Montana Supreme Court has ruled that by Jan. 1 all documents filed in the state's courts must contain at least 50 percent recycled paper. The National Wildlife Federation says the court responded to a petition by two environmental organizations.

Texas hunting fatalities reached an all-time low last year. The state reported six fatalities out of 62 hunting accidents. It's the first time since 1966 that fatalities have been in single digits. The 27-year average for fatalities in Texas is 17.6, but the average for the past three years is nine. Wildlife officials credit increased use of blaze orange and a successful hunter education program for the reduction.

North Dakota last spring made its third release of greater prairie chickens as part of an ongoing project to reestablish the birds. Although the prairie chicken is not believed to be a native species, it thrived in the state from the 1880s to 1930s. Scientists think the bird extended its range into North Dakota as the bison disappeared and agriculture became prevalent.

Answers: D, F, G, A, E, C, B

On the Trail of Pennsylvania's Black Bear

Two years in the making, based on the most exhaustive and comprehensive black bear research conducted in North America, *On the Trail of Pennsylvania's Black Bears* is a most entertaining and informative video production on Pennsylvania's premier big game animal. Hosted by Gary Alt and photographed by Game Commission videographer Hal Korber, this 100-minute video will appeal to all wildlife enthusiasts. It costs \$29.95, delivered. Order from the Game Commission, Department MS, 2001 Elmerton Ave., Harrisburg, PA 17110-9797.



1993 WATERFOWL STAMP

“Dawdling Dabblers”

CONSERVATION

Each year the Commission offers for sale a voluntary waterfowl conservation stamp. Profits from these sales are used for wetland acquisition, habitat development and



waterfowl-related education programs. This year's design features a pair of northern shovellers by York artist Glen Reichard.

COLLECTOR VALUE

The stamps have great collector value because editions are available for a limited time only; stamps remaining after two years are destroyed. The 1991 stamp will be destroyed after Dec. 31.

COST

Stamps cost \$5.50 each, \$22 for a plate block of four and \$55 for a full sheet of 10. When you purchase five or more full sheets (any available editions), the price drops to \$40 per sheet. Prices include tax and delivery.

Waterfowl conservation stamps are available at all Commission offices and wildlife management areas, and at participating license issuing agents and stamp dealers. Limited edition signed prints are available from art dealers and galleries.

PENNSYLVANIA GAME NEWS

SEPTEMBER 1993

ONE DOLLAR



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PENNSYLVANIA GAME NEWS (ISSN 0031-451X) is published monthly for \$9 per year, \$25.50 for three years (Pennsylvania residents add 6% sales tax), or membership in Pennsylvania's Cooperative Farm-Game Project or Safety Zone Project; to Canada and all other foreign countries, \$10 U.S. currency, per year. Published by the Pennsylvania Game Commission, Harrisburg, PA. Phone (717) 787-4250. Second-class postage paid at Harrisburg, Pa. CHANGE OF ADDRESS: POSTMASTER: Send both old and new addresses to Pennsylvania Game News, 2001 Elmerton Ave., Harrisburg, PA 17110-9797. Allow six weeks for processing. Material accepted is subject to our requirements for editing and revising. Author payment covers all rights and title to accepted material, including manuscripts, photographs, drawings and illustrations. No information contained in this magazine may be used for advertising or commercial purposes. Opinions expressed here do not necessarily reflect those of the Pennsylvania Game Commission. Copyright © 1993 by the Pennsylvania Game Commission, an Equal Opportunity Employer, the programs of which are all administered consistent with the goals and objectives of Affirmative Action. All rights reserved.

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Put an Indoorsman (or woman) in Your Shoes

NATIONAL HUNTING and Fishing Day, a tradition for more than two decades, this year issued a challenge to sportsmen and women across the nation. The National Shooting Sports Foundation, primary sponsor of NHF Day, wants you to "Put an Indoorsman in Your Shoes." It's the same message NSSF used in 1975, and the challenge rings as loudly now as it did then because the importance of introducing nonhunters, trappers and anglers to the outdoors is as important as ever.

A fast growing segment of society is living in urban and suburban environments, growing up and living lives with virtually no exposure to the outdoors or, therefore, an appreciation for how important and valuable our outdoor heritage is.

More specifically, through this year's NHF Day promotions, sportsmen are being encouraged to introduce a friend, co-worker or relative to some facet of the outdoor sports. This could lead to the beginning of a new friendship and a new companion to share those special moments afield. In a broader sense, introducing more people to the outdoors will improve public understanding and appreciation of these American traditions. If future generations are to enjoy the outdoors and all it has to offer, mustering broad-based support from the general public is vital.

People who remember the 1975 NHF Day promotion will note that it's been changed for 1993: Women have been included. Women are participating in the outdoor sports more than ever before, and they're playing increasingly stronger roles in the decision making processes that affect wildlife, conservation and the sports. Also, with the increasing prevalence of single-parent households it's often up to mothers to introduce youngsters to the outdoor sports.

The Game Commission has been working hard in recent years to expose more youngsters to hunting, shooting, trapping and the outdoors in general through Youth Field Day programs. In many areas across the state, the agency has been helping sportsmen's clubs conduct Youth Field Days that for many kids serve as their initiation to activities such as shooting and fishing.

"Most Americans are now more familiar with an environment of glass, steel and concrete than they are with fields, forests and streams, and many have lost touch with nature," NSSF President Bob Delfray said when announcing this year's theme. "There's a whole new world waiting for the new outdoorsman, and sportsmen have the keys to unlock it. One of the greatest favors any sportsman can do for friends and relatives is to take the time to introduce them to his favorite sports. This is especially true for children, since many have grown up without the traditional links to nature enjoyed by past generations."

Over the years, many NHF Day promotions have centered around activities and efforts conducted and coordinated by organized sportsmen's clubs. And such can be the case this year, too. But introducing someone new to the outdoors is something each of us can do, in our own way, at our own time, as individuals.

This year, make a personal commitment to introduce somebody to the outdoor sports. — *Bob Mitchell*

Letters

Editor:

In reading Richard Tate's "A Hunter's First Year," in your July issue, I noticed that his son Bobby was not wearing any fluorescent orange while squirrel hunting. Was this an oversight or what?

J. MARKLE,
WASHINGTON

Your point is well taken. Although the new fluorescent orange regulations were not in effect when Bobby began hunting, we should've mentioned the new safety regulations in the caption accompanying the photo.

Editor:

Marcia Bonta's "A Ruff Month" (May) reminded me of a time several years ago while I was in Potter County, riding on a tractor with a friend, and we were "attacked" by a ruffed grouse.

The bird ran beside us for several yards, and when we stopped, the grouse actually jumped up on my lap. Then, while we were cutting wood with a chainsaw, the grouse got so close he got covered with sawdust.

W. H. LANG,
WELLSVILLE, NY

Editor:

As a former Pennsylvanian, I enjoy reading *Game News* — it brings a little bit of Pennsylvania to me. I've always enjoyed the great outdoors, and I raised two young men who learned to love the privilege with me.

You've got a great magazine, and through it you can reach the young ones. They, more than anyone, need to learn that by joining

together we can preserve the privileges of hunting, trapping and fishing.

The antis are strong and determined, but the sportsmen are stronger. We can win, and the young people are the key.

I. DEEMER,
ROCKFORD, IL

Editor:

The July OWL Column, "Noxious Weeds," was very informative. I think it would have been better, though, if a photo or illustration would have accompanied each plant description. That way we could have seen what the plants actually looked like without writing for the Bureau of Plant Industry booklet.

P. FRATINI,
BULGER

Editor:

Every year I find more prime hunting land posted against trespassing. It seems in many instances that people from neighboring states or the city, purchase a large tract of land, and then post it right away, without any regard for those who have been hunting the land for years.

It's difficult to obtain permission to hunt these lands. The owners are either impossible to locate or they have the idea that hunting is bad.

I propose that at least 10 cents per No Trespassing sign be charged at the time of printing, the money to go to

the Game Commission for habitat improvement, land acquisition, and to improve public access.

On second thought, maybe \$1 per sign would be more realistic.

R.G. FISTER,
NEW TRIPOLE

Editor:

I just finished reading "Technician rescues Woodward bats" (Conservation News, July). Woodward Cave is not located in Union County. It is in Centre County.

L. VONADA,
WOODWARD

Editor:

The biathlon article in the July issue really drove home the importance of introducing non-shooters and non-hunters to firearms and the outdoors.

People who don't participate in the outdoor sports far outnumber those of us who do, and when issues that affect us come up for vote — as they have in other states — the more folks we have in our corner the better. By showing the public that hunting and shooting are fun, wholesome and safe activities, we can tip the odds in our favor. It may be the best way to save our sports.

I'm all behind the Game Commission's efforts in this area, whether it's biathlons or youth field days.

J. RIGGINS,
HARRISBURG

**Your comments are welcome. Mail them to "Letters,"
2001 Elmerton Ave., Harrisburg, PA 17110-9797.
Letters will be edited for brevity and clarity.**

Bucks County Backyard Bowhunt

It's difficult to make choices when given chances at several handsome whitetails during the archery season — unless there's one so big that none other will do.

By David Kirk

THE BUCK WAS MOVING from the woodlot to the field and would pass within a dozen yards. Grunting every 10 to 15 seconds as he went, he was pursuing the doe that had crossed moments earlier. I was lying on the ground, in the middle of a dirt cart path that bisected the waist-high overgrown field. When his grunts indicated he was about 20 yards away and still coming, I moved into a kneeling position and came to full draw.

Although I had shot three deer with my Bear recurve, I hadn't hunted with a bow since 1976. In the intervening years I hadn't been able to find the time for the practicing and scouting it takes to be a proficient archery hunter. Besides, my buddies and I had been doing well during our annual gun hunting trips to Centre and Huntingdon counties.

Fortunately, some things do change. Two new acquaintances from church were enthusiastic archers. Both hunted locally in Bucks County, and from the end of the 1990 archery season through the '91 spring gobbler season they tirelessly hounded me to pick up my bow. But our young children kept the family fall schedule filled with soccer, ballet and other activities.

Nevertheless, I'd always wanted to walk out behind our housing development and hunt the deer that rummaged through our garden several times each summer. Finally, on a Fourth of July weekend, I broke down, bought a target and started to practice while the kids were swimming.

By Labor Day, 90 percent of my 20-yard shots were falling in a 9-inch square. I had even broken or bent three arrows with "Robin Hoods" — an arrow striking one already in the target. Two weeks later, 50 percent of my 35-yard shots were there, too. Even better was that my misses at 35 yards were due to elevation rather than windage. If I missed, the arrows fell short. In my previous experience as a bowhunter I'd taken only one shot beyond 15 yards, so I felt ready to once again head into the deer woods as an archer.

I was anxiously looking forward to the opener, but my



DOUG PIERCE

daughter's early morning soccer game was going to keep me out of the woods until afternoon. By five o'clock I was finally able to sneak out. A large tree in a wooded strip between a soybean field and an overgrown field made for a perfect natural stand.

A deer trail passed through the wood strip 30 yards from the tree. Fresh tracks in the field suggested the deer were bedding in a 10-acre woodlot beyond the overgrown field. They apparently passed through the soybean field to go to a stream that lay just beyond.

At 5:15 I got to my tree, and 15 minutes later, as I was still imagining all the possible shooting scenarios that might develop, I heard rustling noises. I turned to the soybean field and found myself looking at two deer only 15 yards away. A doe was in the lead, followed by a button buck. Both were broadside, beginning to feed on soybeans.

I drew on the button buck but then eased off. I couldn't end a season only 15 minutes old, at least not on a button buck.

They fed across the field, melted into the woods and disappeared toward the stream. The rest of the evening was quiet, but I walked home exhilarated at having such a good opportunity.

The second Saturday morning passed with nothing moving but squirrels and a cat hunting mice. I was optimistic that evening, though, as I climbed back into the tree at 5:30. I had already rehearsed the possible shots, so I quickly relaxed and let the squirrels entertain me.

After a half-hour, while scanning the soybean field, I looked toward the stream and caught movement 100 yards out. It was antlers swinging slowly left and right. I couldn't believe it. The rack was huge. I watched as the deer made sure the field was clear before stepping out to feed.

Even at that distance, without binoculars, I could clearly see 10 points. Only once had I ever seen a larger buck.

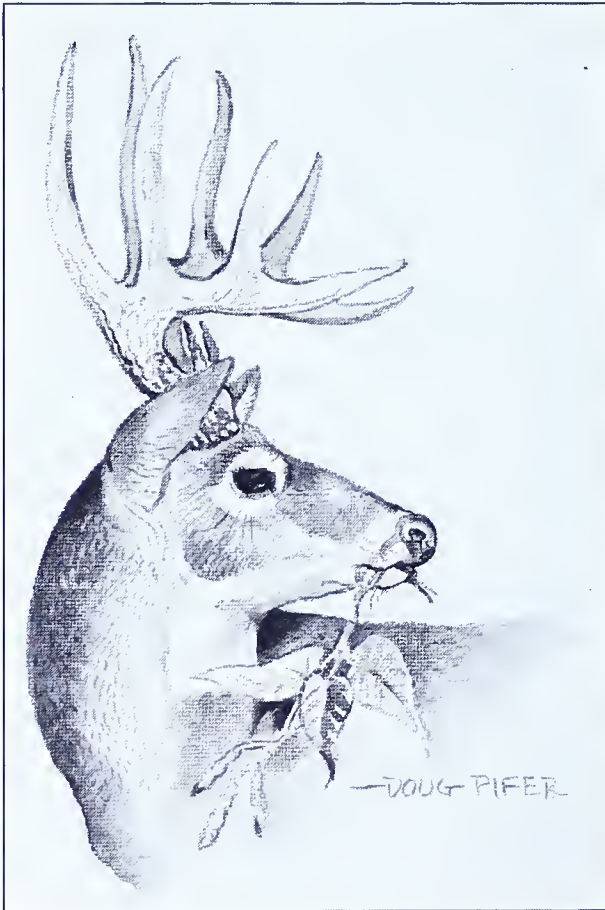
The buck nibbled a few soybeans, took a few steps, then ate a few more. He was feeding across the field, coming directly toward me. I began to set up for a shot I had just rehearsed.

Once my feet and body were positioned, I drew and took aim on the shooting lane where I thought the buck would come. It was a shot I had checked several times before, but I had to try one more time just to make sure there were no interfering limbs. Then I focused back on the buck.

He was feeding, unalarmed and still coming. The five minutes it took him to cross the field gave me time to study his rack. The 10 points swept up high and spread to about 23 inches before coming back to tips that were eight inches apart.

I was perched on the backside of the tree facing away from him. I could watch his approach and would be able to draw without his knowing I was there.

THE BUCK was feeding, unalarmed and still coming. The five minutes it took him to cross the field gave me time to study his rack.



At 50 yards he changed course and began heading for a trail 30 yards to my right. I quickly calculated his closest point was going to be 35 yards out. Recalling my success at that distance when practicing, and my propensity to undershoot if I missed, I mentally prepared for the shot of a lifetime.

When he was broadside at 35 yards, I took a deep breath, drew, focused on a spot just behind his right shoulder and released. The arrow sailed in an arc toward his chest . . . and crashed harmlessly into the field directly under his belly.

The buck bolted, ran 30 yards into the field and then stopped to search for what had interrupted his dinner. He hadn't seen or smelled me, so he didn't look in my direction. He stood there for more than a minute, wagged his tail and slowly retraced his path back toward the stream.

When he disappeared I checked my watch. It was only 6:10, but I was too rattled to stay in the tree and hunt another 50 minutes until quitting time. I was anxious to retrieve my arrow, to make sure I hadn't touched him, and I found it eight inches behind the front hoof prints he left.

Walking home to share my excitement with my family, I realized this season was going to be very different from all others. I was going to do something I had never done before: I was going to devote the rest of the archery season to hunting one particular buck.

I began hunting every free hour I had. After two blank evenings, I decided to find another stand. I moved across the soybean field toward the stream. Inside the woods the hill quickly dropped down to the water. I moved to the left of where the buck had headed, and I found a bench halfway down the slope that looked ideal.

My first morning on the new stand was uneventful until just one minute before I

had to leave for work. A deer walked into view 75 yards away, down along the stream. I couldn't tell whether it was a buck or a doe, and within moments it was out of sight. I got up quietly and left.

The following morning I was in the woods at 6:30 and began clearing leaves and brush away from a tree 15 yards from where the deer appeared the day before.

By seven o'clock the woods had brightened only a little when I saw a deer heading down from the soybean field. It was moving quickly, seemingly trying to get out of the field and into the thicket before it got too light. It acted like a buck, I thought, but I had no idea where it was going.

The deer cut diagonally down the slope, moving left to right, and clearly wasn't going to turn my way. As it passed within 10 feet of the deadfall stand where I had been the day before, I glimpsed the rack. A respectable six, maybe an eight, but not the big guy. In a moment he was gone.

The third Saturday I headed for the deadfall stand. I went in early, with the owls still hooting, and settled down to wait. Dawn brought lots of squirrels; I lost count after 30. It seemed ironic the squirrel hunters in the area were shooting only occasionally while I sat in the middle of a bonanza and no had interest in hunting squirrels.

By 9:30 stiffness and boredom were setting in. Although not a fan of grunt calls, I decided to break the boredom by piping a series of grunts. Within minutes I heard leaves crunching above me, and they didn't sound like squirrels. The slope of the hill was steep enough for me to simply lean back and turn uphill. I was beginning to ache from the awkward twist when two squirrels charged over the hill in my direction.

Smiling to myself as I sat up, I turned downhill only to find myself looking directly at a deer 25 yards away. Its head was

***Walking home
that night, I
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particular buck.***

swinging slowly, searching. Our eyes met just as I caught the glimmer of antlers. He made a quarter turn, twitched his tail nervously and trotted off. The call worked, but my luck wasn't getting any better. I never did see how many points he had.

When the clocks fell back at the end of October, I felt a renewed sense of excitement. With the rut heightening, I could hunt for an hour and 15 minutes several mornings during the final week.

Tuesday brought nothing. Wednesday, about halfway to my stand, I jumped two deer feeding on apples. It was still too dark to see well, so I walked to my stand along the stream. I stayed longer than I should have and had to hurry when I left. I was already thinking ahead to the office, and I was paying only half attention as I glanced toward the apple trees. But when I picked up the form of a feeding deer only 20 feet away, my mind quickly cleared.

Quartering Away

Its head down, the deer was eating apples. It was quartering away, offering its left rib cage for a shot. The dirt cart path I was on was quiet; I hadn't alerted the deer because I had instinctively dropped to a prone position behind waist-high weeds. I snapped an arrow out of the bow quiver and eased up above the weeds. The deer was gone.

I slowly searched up and down the row, then tried to peer through the honeysuckle under the far side of the tree. Just as I caught motion on the far side, I was startled by that familiar loud, whistling snort. The deer had been feeding around the honeysuckle while an unseen second deer had spotted me. They both bolted across the field. As he moved off with his doe, I had no trouble counting eight respectable points.

The following morning was Halloween. I left the house in the dark, not needing a flashlight because the moon was so bright. Dawn's first light was creeping onto the horizon when I passed the apple trees. As I continued down the cart path, two deer jumped up in a large oak woodlot 75 yards to my left. I kept walking toward my dead-fall stand.

Suddenly I perceived the shadowy form of a deer 75 yards ahead. It was moving from the woodlot on the left and heading toward the open field I was walking through. It was still too dark to tell what it was. Again I lay on the cart path. Another deer, still in the woods to my left, was making a tremendous racket in the leaves. Then I heard the grunting.

A buck seemed to have gotten very excited very quickly and was starting to move out of the woods in my direction. I instantly decided that because it was the second to last day of the season, I was going to be very practical. If this was the 8-point I had seen the day before, I'd take him if he came close enough.

But if he followed what I now assumed to have been a doe, he would be far beyond range. I pulled an arrow from the quiver. The buck grunted every 10 to 15 seconds as he moved out of the woods. My heart raced at the sound — just as it does when turkeys answer a call at first light.

I realized he was taking a shortcut to the doe that would lead him no more than 15 yards in front of me. When his grunts indicated he was about 20 yards away and still coming, I moved into a kneeling position and came to full draw.

The rack came into view at 10 yards. It wasn't the 8-pointer; it was the monstrous 10. Suddenly time seemed suspended. I told myself to concentrate and shift to a focal point just behind his shoulder. I found it, but at the instant of release I realized my fascination with the rack had pulled my attention forward.

The arrow sailed cleanly in front of his chest. He bolted. The buck ran 50 yards, paused to look back, and then, sounding more like a running horse than a deer, loped into the darkness of the woods.

Sitting here thinking about the 13 days I hunted him, I realize the good old days were never quite this good. I hadn't hunted more than five days in any season since my college days in the early '70s. Maybe next year I'll meet him again. Even if I don't, it will be hard to imagine another season as exciting and memorable.

Jump-Shooting Doves

If you're tired of sitting around and waiting for the birds to come to you, here's how to put some exciting action into your hunt.

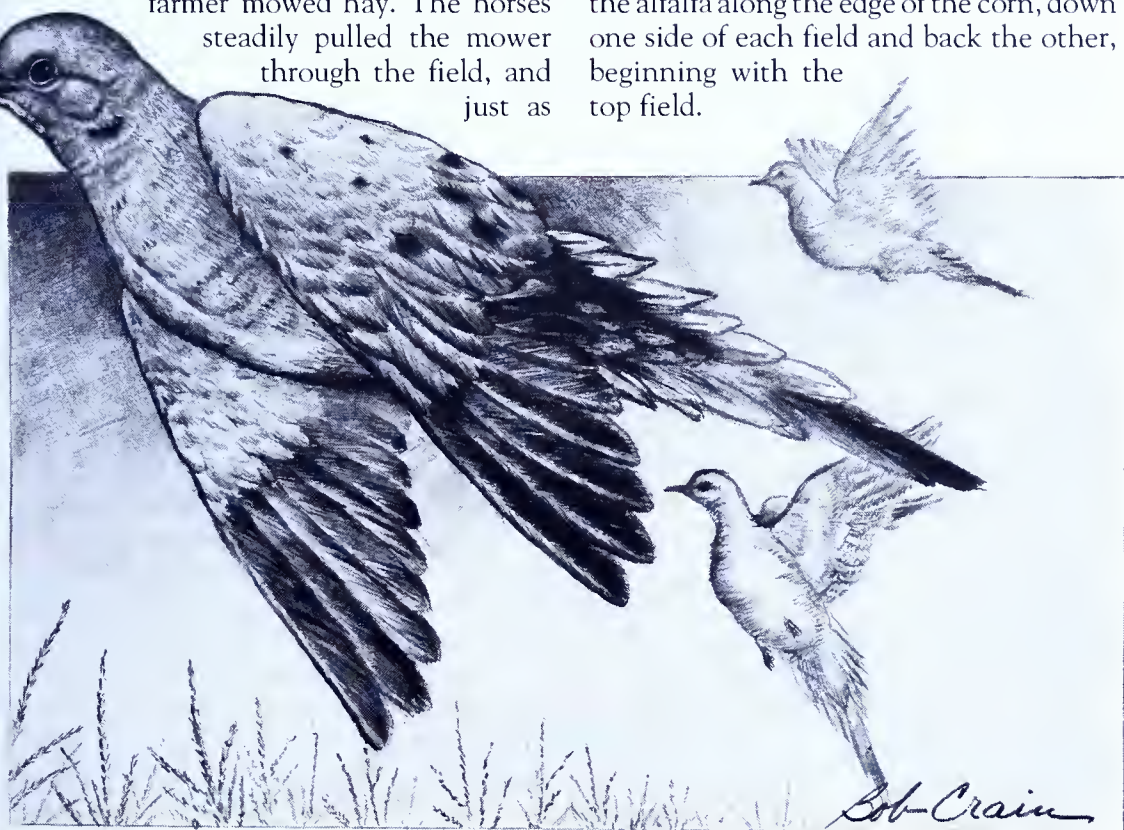
By Dave Cooper

AS I SURVEYED the fields below me, I experienced that tingle of anticipation familiar to all hunters. In just a few minutes it would be 12 o'clock, the season would open, and mourning doves would be legal game. Jan, my Brittany spaniel, sensed my excitement and whined softly.

I bent down to pet her, and my eyes were drawn to a distant field where an Amish farmer mowed hay. The horses steadily pulled the mower through the field, and just as

the tail end of the mower disappeared over the top of a small knoll, the muffled sound of gunfire brought me back to the business at hand. A quick glance at my watch told me the magic hour had finally arrived.

I loaded my shotgun and took another look at the fields to plan my strategy. There were four long cornfields separated by wide strips of short alfalfa. I figured I'd walk in the alfalfa along the edge of the corn, down one side of each field and back the other, beginning with the top field.



DOVE HUNTING is typically a pass-shooting game where the hunter sits or stands in available cover along a well-used flight path. But that's not the only way to do it. As the author points out, walking along the edges of grain fields can flush doves and make for exciting shooting.

After a short walk down the hill to the first field, we got in position and I gave Jan the command, "Go on." She immediately began sweeping back and forth over the alfalfa, and before long she began edging closer and closer to the corn.

As she started to enter the cornfield, I called her back, and just then a band of doves exploded from the cornfield — flying away at breakneck speed.

Frantic Search

At the first sound of whistling wings, I shouldered my shotgun and frantically searched for a target. I picked up one flying straight away. At the shot, it crumpled in a puff of gray and fell into the alfalfa 25 yards out. I marked the spot and then quickly swung on another dove winging high over the cornfield. As the front bead passed the bird, I pulled the trigger and the dove dropped into the cornfield. What a way to begin a new season — a double on my first two shots.

I pointed to the cornfield and told Jan to fetch. She bounded in, nose to the ground, and in a few minutes she returned with the dove, her tail wagging merrily. I took the bird, petted her, told her what a good girl she was, and then sent her for the other. In less than a minute she brought the dove from the alfalfa.

We continued on, and soon a pair of doves came whistling out of the corn. One of them dipped low over the cornstalks, offering me no chance, but the other one stayed high. I brought that one down, and

as Jan retrieved it I began to have visions of a 12 for 12 day.

When I reached the hedgerow at the end of the cornfield, a dozen doves flew out of the trees. Unfortunately, all of them went out on the far side and left me no shot. As I watched them fly away, a lone bird blasted out of the top of a tall walnut tree and headed back over the corn. I promptly missed it with two shots, abruptly ending my visions of a perfect shooting day.

I moved to the lower side of the cornfield and started walking back to the beginning of the field where the hunt began. The first cornfield was pretty wide, and I hoped there still were some doves that hadn't flushed when I'd hunted the upper side.

I'd nearly reached the end of the field and was beginning to have my doubts when four birds flew out and hooked back over my head. I quickly swung around and managed to hit the last one in the band.

The second cornfield wasn't disappointing. Bands of two, three and four doves took to the air as we slowly hunted along its edge. Four more birds went into my game bag before we came to the end of the field. Just before we reached the hedgerow, Jan started acting "birdy," then locked up in a classic point. As I walked past her, a large cockbird flushed, cackling loudly as it flew through the fencerow and over the hill.

It was a typically warm day, and I decided to take a break. We headed for a farm pond where Jan could cool off and take a drink. As she splashed into the pond, I sat under a large maple tree and sipped water from my canteen.

My thoughts drifted back to the days when these fields held dozens of cockbirds, and I devoted my bird hunting to them. For me, the season began Aug. 1 when I could begin working my dogs in the fields. During those training and conditioning sessions, the dogs would flush many doves from standing cornfields, but I paid little attention.

DOGS ARE INVALUABLE assets for jumpshooting. Birds will often tumble into cornfields where they can be hard to find. Using a good dog cuts down on losses.



When pheasants declined, I switched to grouse. But I soon found that I missed hunting birds that flew out of weeds, hay and standing corn. Then I remembered the many doves my dogs had flushed out of summer cornfields during our training sessions. I decided that when the season came around in September, I would give dove hunting a try.

By trial and error, I developed a jump-shooting strategy. I found it isn't necessary to walk inside corn rows. The doves readily fly out of the corn whenever I walk the outside edge. I also learned early on that it's best to carry a shotgun at port arms; it pays to be ready because doves are quick to fly out of range or out of sight over the tops of the corn.

The birds normally flush close, though, so powerful shotshells aren't necessary. I use low base rounds with three drams of powder and 1 $\frac{1}{8}$ ounces of No. 8 shot. I've found this load, fired through my Browning Light Twelve and a cylinder choke, is effective for jump-shooting.

My dogs are invaluable in finding and retrieving doves, especially those dropped in standing corn. I don't allow my dogs to enter standing corn except to retrieve a fallen bird, though. I know the farmers probably wouldn't appreciate it, and I don't want the dogs running ahead, flushing doves out of range. Hitting these lightning-fast birds is hard enough — even when they're flushed nearby.

One problem with jump-shooting and the walking it entails is the heat of September. Short sleeve shirts and baggy pants are the order of the day, along with a long-billed hat to shade the eyes and head. My wife made me a combination game bag and shell holder so I don't have to wear a heavy game coat to carry shells and birds.

I tried wearing sneakers, thinking they would be cool and comfortable, but I soon found boots gave me much better ankle support. I bought a canteen to carry water for me and the dogs. When the temperature gets unbearably hot and humid, I either quit hunting for the day or switch to pass-shooting.

FOR MORE ON DOVES

ECOLOGY AND MANAGEMENT of the Mourning Dove, Stackpole Books, 5067 Ritter Rd., Mechanicsburg, PA 17055 (this is a new address), 567 pp. The book sells for \$44.95 plus shipping, but those who identify themselves as *Game News* readers may buy it for \$39.95, delivered.

The mourning dove is the most popular game bird in North America, at least in terms of numbers of birds harvested. Published in association with the Wildlife Management Institute, this book is an authoritative and up-to-date account of the mourning dove's natural history, distribution, biology, management and more.

Hundreds of charts, tables and graphs put the technical information in an easy-to-understand perspective, and the illustrations make the book appealing to browse through, too. Those who found the *White-tailed Deer*, *Elk of North America* and other WMI books appealing will enjoy this one as well.

When Jan returned from her swim that opening day, she seemed eager to get back to it. It was a sweltering hot afternoon, but I decided to hunt along one side of the third cornfield before calling it a day.

We didn't go far before a single flew out of the corn and gave me an easy crossing shot. Soon after Jan made the retrieve and we'd started again, two more flushed from the alfalfa field. One went right and the other peeled off to the left.

I took the one on the left first, then swung on the other bird as it rapidly departed. It tumbled at the shot and fell back into the alfalfa. I put them in my game bag and unloaded my shotgun.

The day began with a double and ended the same way. I took 11 birds, enough for my baked dove casserole recipe, and Jan performed magnificently. Plenty of doves remained for another day. Who could ask for anything more?

Bats

MOST PEOPLE are frightened when they find bats in their homes. But the more we learn about these sophisticated mammals, the more we realize they pose no real threat or danger, and that with just minor considerations, people and bats can — and should — coexist in harmony.

— by PGC photographer Hal Korber and
PSU wildlife specialist Lisa Williams



THE LITTLE BROWN BAT is the species most often found in buildings, but big brown and long-eared bats have also been found in homes. Most bat problems occur in late spring and early summer when females establish nursery colonies to bear and raise their young.

Sometimes the sites are in attics. The big brown bat and her pup, left, were found roosting with many other bats in the attic of an old home. They will remain in the colony until late summer or early fall.

IN THE SUMMER, while females and young are congregated in nursery colonies, males spend their time alone or in small groups. They roost in cool, shady sites such as behind tree bark, below.



BATS ARE NOT aggressive. Fears about them carrying rabies are based largely on myths or, more specifically, on faulty research conducted in the 1930s. Today we know that not only is the incidence of rabies rare among bats, but that when a bat is affected by the rabies virus, it becomes paralyzed and dies within a few days.

Unfortunately, these are bats that people and pets find lying on the ground. Therefore, any bat that does not appear to be acting normally should be avoided, or, if appropriate, killed and buried.



ONE OF the biggest nuisances of a bat colony is the accumulation of droppings, called guano — which actually makes excellent fertilizer because of its high nitrogen content.

Bat droppings, as opposed to rodent droppings, are dry and powdery, not moist. Also, because bat droppings contain the remains of wings from insects the bats have eaten, they glitter or sparkle when crumbled.

TO REMOVE a bat roost from an attic, as Lisa Williams shows here, first locate all entrances. Then, in fall or winter, after the bats have left for the season, seal the openings. Bats are not gnawing animals like raccoons, squirrels, mice and other mammals that may inhabit peoples' attics, so caulking will work fine for sealing small openings. For larger gaps, screening or quarter-inch hardware cloth can be used.





USING STRATEGICALLY placed thermocouples, researchers monitor environmental conditions in attics where bats have established maternity colonies and in artificial nest boxes erected specifically to give the bats substitute summer roost sites.



DANA LIMPERT, left, a biologist with the Maryland Department of Natural Resources, visited several Pennsylvania study sites to learn more about starting a bat house program in Maryland.



RESEARCH INDICATES bats prefer a horizontal box in the spring and a vertical design later in the summer. This may be because a horizontal box gets too hot in summer. A vertical box offers a wider range of temperatures, giving the bats more of an opportunity to find a comfortable zone.

It's also possible that parasites can build up in horizontal boxes. Bats are fastidious groomers, and parasites don't fall from horizontal boxes like they do from verticals.

Bat pups, too, can fall out of a horizontal box, so researchers are now experimenting with compromise designs.



HOMEOWNERS with bats in their attics need to realize how important these nursery colonies are. Eliminating a nursery colony can have devastating effects on local bat populations. Because bats have low reproductive rates, they don't quickly recover from catastrophic losses.

People who want to evict bats from their homes are encouraged to install a bat box on or near the building. That will give the bats a substitute place to raise their young.

COLONIES begin forming in mid-April. Pups are born around the first week of June and are flying when four or five weeks of age — usually mid-July. By August they're foraging on their own.

Pups remain with their mothers until the colony breaks up in the fall. Males start to drift away and live a life on their own or with other males. Females remain with their mothers and return to the nursery colony sites the following spring, which is another reason to put up boxes after evicting bats — it gives the females a place to return to.

It's best to erect bat boxes in the summer, while the bats are still around, so they can become accustomed to the box before leaving for hibernation sites. It also appears bats are more willing to accept a box that has weathered through the winter.



BATS AND PEOPLE can coexist. Bats are fascinating animals in their own right, and each bat will consume up to 3,000 insects a night. Extrapolating that out among dozens or hundreds of bats over the course of the summer, the numbers quickly become astronomical.

For more about bats and plans for building a bat box, write the Pennsylvania Game Commission, Dept. MS, 2001 Elmerton Ave., Harrisburg, PA 17110-9797.

The Sharp-Shinned Hawk

Small and secretive, the forest dwelling ‘sharpie’ will migrate through the state in huge numbers early this fall. Some wonder whether that will always be the case.

By Greg Grove



ON A COOL October morning, I sat just below the ridgetop on Jack's Mountain, several hundred very steep feet above the Fox Trot hunting camp I share with uncles and cousins. I don't recall if I was squirrel hunting or just scouting for a deer stand. Sitting there, enjoying my solitude and the serene surroundings, I could not help but notice the arrival of a group of blue jays, squawking and yelling like their cousins, the crows, when they discover a roosting owl.

Most leaves had not yet fallen, and though the jays were close by, I could not easily see them or determine the reason for their displeasure. After a few minutes of peering intently through twigs and leaves, I noticed another bird sitting quietly on a branch 30 yards slightly up the slope from me.

A moment later I saw a second, similar bird nearby. They were slightly bigger than the jays and essentially brown. I realized they were hawks, but without binoculars I could see no distinguishing features.

I watched for several minutes. I don't think the hawks realized I was there. They probably had flown in while I sat quietly looking down the mountain. Eventually some movement on my part caught the hawks' attention and they quickly moved on. The jays' protest over their presence apparently made no impression on the hawks, but the realization of a nearby human was a different story.

Later, looking at my field guide, I decided they were probably immature sharp-shinned hawks. I based this on their small size and generally brownish appearance. In addition, pure chance favored my conclusion because sharpshins are the most numerous hawk in Pennsylvania during October, a time when the breeding population is augmented by many migrating sharpshins from farther north.

An adult sharpshin is a handsome bird. It has dark blue-gray





feathers on its head, back and folded wings. The breast and belly appear rust-red, due to horizontal rows of red feathers on a light background. Immature birds are mostly brown; their breasts usually have heavy vertical streaks on a light creamy background. Female sharpshins are significantly larger than males — a fact that raises some interesting biological questions discussed later.

Some field guides describe the sharpshinned hawk as being the size of a blue jay. My impression is of a somewhat larger bird. Like many other hawks, sharpshins are also called “chicken hawks” because of the old, erroneous belief that they specialized in raiding henhouses.

They are also called “little blue darters” in reference to their adult plumage and their skill at maneuvering through trees, brush and other obstacles in pursuit of prey.

The hawk watchers who count the birds as they pass ridgetop lookouts during fall migration simply call them “sharpies.” The name sharp-shinned actually refers to a hard, sharp ridge on the front of their legs.

Sharpshins are accipiters, a family that also includes the Cooper’s hawk, which is

larger but similar in appearance to the sharpshin, and the rare northern goshawk, which is almost the size of the familiar red-tailed hawk.

The three accipiter species have similar lifestyles and are built along the same lines: relatively short wings (for a hawk) and a long tail. This design allows accipiters to maneuver after small birds through the crowded airspace of their forest hunting grounds.

Sharpshins breed across northern North American, from central Alaska and Canada south into the Rocky Mountains, the upper Great Plains and through much of the Appalachian range in the east. Although they are fairly common breeders in Pennsylvania, they are difficult to census because of their secretive nature and preference for large tracts of sparsely inhabited (by humans) forests.

Sharpies winter through much of the central and southeastern United States. One assessment of their wintering range suggested that they do not fare well in areas where winter temperatures frequently drop below zero.

This hypothesis seems to hold in Pennsylvania where sub-zero nights are common in the north but not in the south. On Christmas bird counts, many sharpies are reported from southeastern counts but few from northern counts. (Of course, many more birders live in southern Pennsylvania than in the north and, therefore, more sightings are to be expected).

Songbirds, including sparrows, warblers, robins and other small and medium size birds, constitute more than 90 percent of the sharpshin diet. The hawk usually watches quietly from an inconspicuous perch, and upon sighting a potential victim it launches a surprise attack with a burst of speed.

If successful, the bird flies to a perch and plucks the feathers from its meal before eating it. But if the surprise attack doesn’t bring immediate results, the sharpie quickly gives up the chase rather than waste energy.





Although primarily forest birds, some sharp-shinned hawks (and also Cooper's hawks) take advantage of winter bird feeding stations in rural and suburban areas. The concentration of small birds at feeders provides a fairly reliable menu through the winter months.

In my own backyard I have occasionally seen a sharpshin perched quietly in a tree, watching the feeder area. Even when a hawk is not in view, the songbirds let you know. Many suddenly melt away, seeming to become invisible. The ground-feeding juncos and sparrows freeze, hugging the ground and remaining motionless as long as danger lurks.

I once watched a downy woodpecker merge with a bare limb of a lilac for 20 minutes, finally outwaiting a sharpshin perched at some distance. The hawk eventually gave up and flew away, probably to return later when the feeding birds had perhaps forgotten the threat of the predator.

Some people may be upset by the thought of a hawk killing the defenseless birds that have come to depend on free handouts and to "trust" in the good intentions of their human benefactors. But the hawk has no choice.

Like any animal, including people, the hawk must eat. His niche in nature includes consumption of meat, just like those of us who eat beef, chicken or deer. The sharpshin itself sometimes becomes the hunted, preyed upon by larger goshawks and great horned owls.

Sharpshins usually nest deep in the forest. As a result, their activities are not easily studied. A preliminary step in the mating process is courtship feeding of the female by the male — a common behavior among many bird species. This ritual probably evolved as a means by which the

female can judge the ability of a prospective mate to provide food, both to her as she incubates the eggs and later to satisfy the demands of hungry young.

A new nest of sticks and twigs is built each year, usually in a dense hemlock or other conifer. Although high, the nest is usually placed under the uppermost canopy. This shields the nest from the view of potential predators and also provides shade from summer's heat.

According to hawk researchers Noel and Helen Snyder, the female sharpshin lays four or five speckled eggs, one every other day. Each weighs 19 grams, about one-tenth the weight of the female. Incubation lasts 30 to 35 days and is apparently the sole responsibility of the female; the male provides food to her during this time.

After the eggs hatch, the male provides most of the food. But as the nestlings grow larger and hungrier, the female helps more and more. By the end of the nestling stage, a dozen or more prey items, mostly small birds, are brought to the nest each day.

Three to four weeks after hatching, the nestlings are ready for flight. Their hunting skills are not yet developed, so the adults continue to provide food for another month. As fall approaches, the young must learn to fend for themselves; their parents will be of no assistance in getting them through the winter.

The life of a predator is difficult in winter; immature, inexperienced birds suffer greatly as they learn to hunt, somewhat by instinct but also by trial and error. The penalty for too many errors, too many missed opportunities, is death by starvation.

Probably less than half of all first-year sharpies live to return north in the spring. Those that learn the lessons of the hunt

Like any animal, including people, the hawk must eat. His niche in nature includes consumption of meat, just like those of us who eat beef, chicken or deer.



and make it through that first winter, however, stand a better chance in subsequent years.

Unless you happen to have a sharpie regularly visit your backyard feeder, you are not likely to see many in the wild. In the woods during breeding season, they are secretive, widely dispersed and well-hidden by the foliage. Normally they will detect you long before you see them.

The best way to see sharpshins is by visiting a known hawk watching site on a windy day from late September through mid-October. During this time, sharpies pass through Pennsylvania by the thousands. Some may settle here for the winter, but most go farther south.

They catch rides on the updrafts created when a west or northwest wind strikes at a right angle to the side of a ridge and is deflected upward. This creates a highway in the sky for sharpies and other migrating raptors; it's a means of covering many miles at the cost of only a few precious calories.

It's not very easy to distinguish migrating sharpshins from other hawks, but in early October sharpies usually outnumber all other migrating hawks combined. Size is often a good clue, although this is sometimes hard to judge. Kestrels are the only eastern hawks smaller than the sharpie. The other common hawks, redtails and broadwings, are much larger and have very broad wings.

Hawk watcher Pete Dunne describes sharpshins as looking like a "flying mallet." When overhead, the sharpshin gives the impression of being a small raptor with short, almost square-looking wings and a rather long tail. The head is small and, when the bird is gliding on an updraft, does not project beyond the shoulders — thus the resemblance to a mallet.

Cooper's hawks, similar in appearance to sharpies, are larger with longer wings and a more prominent head; they are described by Dunne as "flying crosses." For every 10 sharpshins seen during fall migration, only one Cooper's is likely to be observed.

Hawk watchers often identify distant sharpies by their characteristic flight pattern as they move along a ridge. Several quick flaps, then a short glide on outstretched wings, more quick flaps, glide, flaps, glide, and so on. On busy days, sharpshins may pass in loosely knit groups of two or three birds generally not in tight formation.

In the eastern United States, the fall migration of sharpshins shows an interest-

A SPECIES IN TROUBLE?

HAWK WATCHERS in Cape May, NJ, and Hawk Mountain, PA, have charted a troubling decline in migrating sharpshins.

It was first noted at Cape May, where about 80 percent of the birds that pass through are immature. *Hawk Mountain News* reports the Cape May count plummeted from 35,000 birds in 1985 to less than 14,000 in 1991.

The effect didn't show up at Hawk Mountain Sanctuary until 1991. By last year the count of migrating sharpies — mostly adults — was 40 percent below the sanctuary's five-year average.

Laurie Goodrich, conservation ecologist at Hawk Mountain, says the decline warrants attention throughout the Northeast. Because the drop was first noticed among immatures, she and staff biologist Cathy Viverette have begun looking at contaminants that may be affecting reproduction.

Hawk Mountain researchers, in cooperation with Tufts University School of Medicine, have been testing blood and tissue samples from dead sharpshins. They are looking for organochlorines and metals. The study concludes this summer.

In a similar test conducted in 1991, Goodrich says they found elevated levels of DDE — a cousin of the deadly DDT that decimated many bird of prey species until the pesticide was banned in 1972. — JSR



ing pattern. The sharpshins move from the forests of eastern Canada, New England and New York, and head south on a broad front. Along Pennsylvania ridgetops, adults outnumber immature birds. But along the Atlantic Coast, at hawk watching sites such as Cape May, NJ, immatures far outnumber adults. The reason for this disparity is not known.

Some hawk watchers theorize that immature birds are more likely than adults to deviate from their intended southerly heading. The experienced adults have a better idea of where they are going and how to stay on course. They may "realize" that the easier route to the south is to stick to the ridges of the Appalachians and to ride the updraft highway.

Immatures that wander off course to the east eventually encounter the Atlantic coast. Sharpshins are not fond of flying over water, so they then follow the coast-line south. The coast, in effect, acts as a barrier, "stacking-up" sharpies (and other hawk species) along a narrow, well-defined path.

Another interesting aspect of sharpshin biology is the size difference between males and females. Females have an average wingspan of 60 centimeters (about 24 inches) and weigh 175 grams (6.5 ounces), almost twice the 100-gram weight of males, which have an average wingspan of 54 centimeters (21 inches). Similar differences between the sexes also occur in other hawk species.

A likely explanation for these differences is that the larger females can take somewhat larger prey species. This may represent a way of reducing, to some extent, competition for food between the male and female.

As a species, then, sharpshins can exploit a wider range of songbird species. In other words, a mated pair can live and raise young in a somewhat smaller territory than if the two were identical in size and preyed on the same songbirds. In support of this theory, the Snyders found in one study area that the average weight of songbirds cap-

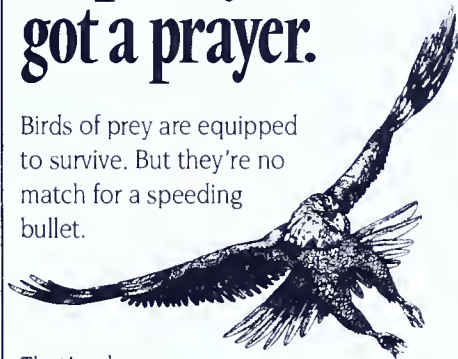
tured by males was 18 grams compared to 28 grams for the females.

An interesting extension of this phenomenon is that while all three accipiter species prey on birds, the three do not overlap in size, and each utilizes different prey. Cooper's hawks specialize on birds the size of robins and blue jays, for example, while northern goshawks often dine on ruffed grouse and sometimes even sharpshins.

As we might expect, closely related species often compete for the same resources. The different sizes of the various accipiters reduce competition by utilizing different, if

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somewhat overlapping, portions of the available food resources.

There was a time when sharpshins and other hawks were persecuted by humans. Most people believed that hawks could decimate domestic fowl flocks if they weren't controlled. Hawks were known to prey on wild birds including ducks, grouse, doves and even robins that were utilized as food by frontier, farm and other rural families.

Seen As Competitors

Hawks were seen as competitors for food, and the attitude that the only good hawk was a dead hawk became widespread. In those difficult times, it was simply a case of what people believed was a common sense approach to a problem.

On a mountaintop in Pennsylvania, this attitude resulted in the shooting of thousands of hawks as they followed the ridge during fall migration.

Fortunately, knowledge and appreciation of the natural world eventually prevailed, and Hawk Mountain Sanctuary was

established. Sharpies and their larger cousins now pass that ridgetop without the threat of a shotgun blast tearing them from the sky. In fact, it was a sharpshin that last fall was recorded as the one-millionth bird logged at Hawk Mountain.

Although our attitudes have changed over the years, the threats to hawks (and all forms of wildlife) are as strong as ever. Rather than outright persecution, however, the threats now come from the sheer force of human numbers: hawks are now lost through collisions with motor vehicles, power lines and towers, through the effects of man-made toxins released into our environment and, perhaps most importantly, through loss of habitat.

But sharpies are not doomed. Enough people have cared about wild things to ensure that land exists, in parks and refuges, where human disturbance will always be minimal. If we continue to be vigilant in our protection efforts, sharp-shinned hawks and other birds of prey will continue to soar past Pennsylvania ridgetops for a long time to come.

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A Mini Mother Lode

A search for grouse turns up a veritable woodcock bonanza — but don't expect to find out where.

By Nick Sisley

Art by Wendy Plowman

MANY YEARS AGO I wrote a story for *Game News* about finding a “mother lode” of migrating woodcock. One reader called to ask me exactly where the cover was located. I lied, told him the story was fiction. The story was certainly true, but lying was an easy way to avoid revealing a great longbill location. Since then I’ve had reservations about fibbing to that fellow, but not often.

Well, last fall I found another mother lode of timberdoodles. They weren’t as concentrated as before, nor in the same cover. But they were found in abundance, making for a fun-filled, adrenaline-pumped morning. I’m calling it the mini mother lode. Here’s how it happened.

Last season, on Wednesday of opening week of grouse season, I tried a cover that had been especially good the previous year. I had already hunted two covers that day, one with Torrie, an English setter, a second with King, an aging pointer.

For this final cover of the afternoon I turned out my third dog, Quill, another English setter. The two of us angled down into a brushy bottom, her electronic beeper keeping me informed of her whereabouts and perhaps warning every grouse in grousehood that we were approaching.

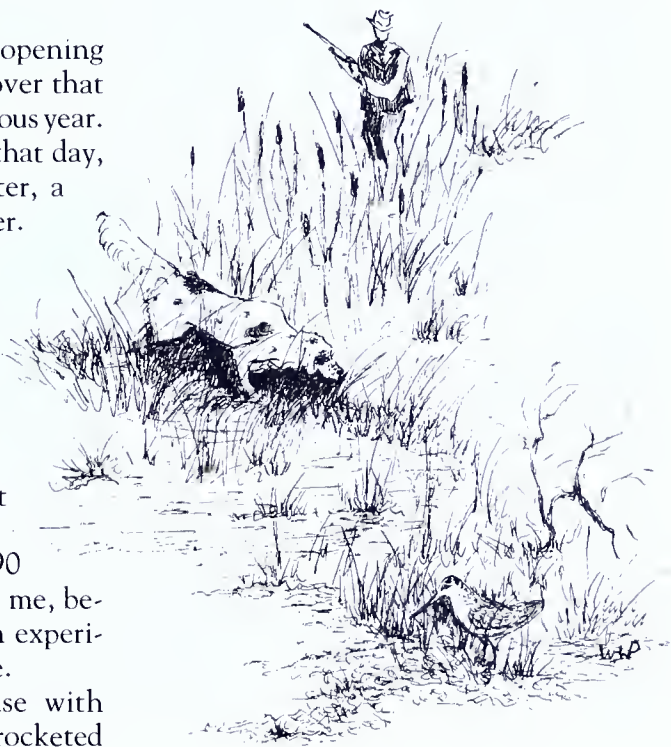
What happened over the next 90 minutes made history, at least for me, because I’ve never come close to an experience of such statistical magnitude.

Quill pointed the first grouse with aplomb, but the feathered quarry rocketed

out before I was close enough for a shot. Naturally, we followed up. Quill pointed again, but the grouse had evidently walked forward. Quill egg-walked in pursuit, only to bump the bird — her master once again too far away.

Dogscolding ensued, even though Quill had done no real wrong. I just hoped the verbal reprimand would encourage her to be more cautious if there happened to be a third encounter. There was, but again no cigar. I caught a blur of feathered wingbeats in the distance — a nervous bird, to be sure.

But as water flows relentlessly to the sea,



it's my philosophy to pursue every grouse flush. So Quill and I took up the chase for the fourth time.

We traipsed to the end of the cover where I figured we had the bird worn out, and I approached the perfect spot for it to have landed. Briers were replete with grape vines, an edge of gray dogwood stems and a fallen tree with limbs — perfect protection. Fingering the safety of my super light semi-auto, I stopped, awaiting the flush I knew was imminent. It never came.

Instead I heard Quill's beeper change tempo to the "on point" mode. Seconds later came the muffled sound of flushing wings. No, I thought to myself, that's another bird. The grouse I'm chasing is right here. Well, if it was it never did flush, despite Quill coming in and giving the brambles a thorough sniffing.

So I angled toward the sound of the flush just mentioned, following up in the direction I thought the bird might have gone. I won't go into the particulars of each ensuing flush, but it is important to note that we flushed that ruff again. And again. And again. And again.

When Quill and I got back to the truck I checked my watch and discovered we had been hunting for 90 minutes. Furthermore, on my whistle lanyard I also carry three stitch counters. One is for tabulating grouse flushes, the second for woodcock flushes, and the third to count the solid points. The grouse stitch counter read 19 — all the same bird. That's the statistical history of which I speak.

Well, at least I think it was all the same bird. I know I followed every flush, and I succeeded 19 times. It is possible another bird or two may have been encountered as Quill and I pursued the original. Then again, maybe we kept flushing that one over and over.

Business found me in Georgia the following week. Despite my desire to pick up the trail of what might be a "super grouse," the big bucks of Georgia's Harris County interfered. But upon my return, I no sooner had my bags unpacked and my mail opened than my mind was back on those 19 flushes in 90 minutes.

And I had company, too. John and Wendy were relaxing in my dining room, savoring grouse fillets sautéed in a lemon cream sauce. And even better, the next day we'd be grouse hunting.

The next morning we headed for a cover in the northern sector of the county. If you've been reading *Game News* for many years, you might recall "Spooky Day in the Crabs," which I did several years ago.

On this day, John, Wendy and I hunted those same "crabs," a crabapple

patch. It was spooky back then because of all the unexpected grouse encounters. It was spooky on this particular hunt because we saw so few flushing feathers.

Not to worry. I had a prime patch picked for the following morning. But it, too, proved a literal dud. The three of us didn't punch a primer. We weren't far, though, from the 19 grouse in 90 minutes cover, so I headed over.

But I parked in a different spot; no sense leading John and Wendy on a fruitless 500-yard trek when I knew the grouse (or perhaps more than one) was only a couple hundred yards from this new parking spot. As a guide, I was frustrated with our lack of action. I wanted my guests to shoot.

Around us was a field of grass, the plantings of coal strippers. The bottoms and ridgetops had held no coal, so they were still wooded, mostly a mix of briers, ninebark, silky dogwood, gray dogwood, crabapple, thornapple, greenbrier, multi-flora, vines and other plants.

When Quill and I got back to the truck, I checked my watch and discovered we'd been hunting for 90 minutes The grouse stitch counter read 19.

The dogs for this patch, my Quill and the guests' Dolly, began making game only a few yards from the truck. They were working a vintage fencerow that led from the truck toward the inviting bottomland ahead. I was already thinking woodcock as I viewed the cover, despite gravitating to this patch because of the 19/90 grouse statistics.

I had a relatively easy poke at the first flush, a longbill that had Wendy's name written all over it. I never so much as touched the safety or raised the gun. Turns out Wendy didn't have much of a chance, even though her Remington belched thrice toward the departing, twittering wings.

The follow-up was easy because the bird flew straight ahead. At the next flush I had no compunction about shooting because I knew Wendy would not be able to see this long-billed departer. I fired just as the tim disappeared from view — not unusual in these thick-cover situations.

Everything felt perfect. I knew I'd sacked that doodle. John affirmed he had seen it go down. Thirty minutes of unsuccessful searching later, all of us depressed, we moved on with heavy hearts.

But that's when we encountered the mini mother lode. Grouse, where I expected them, were almost nonexistent.

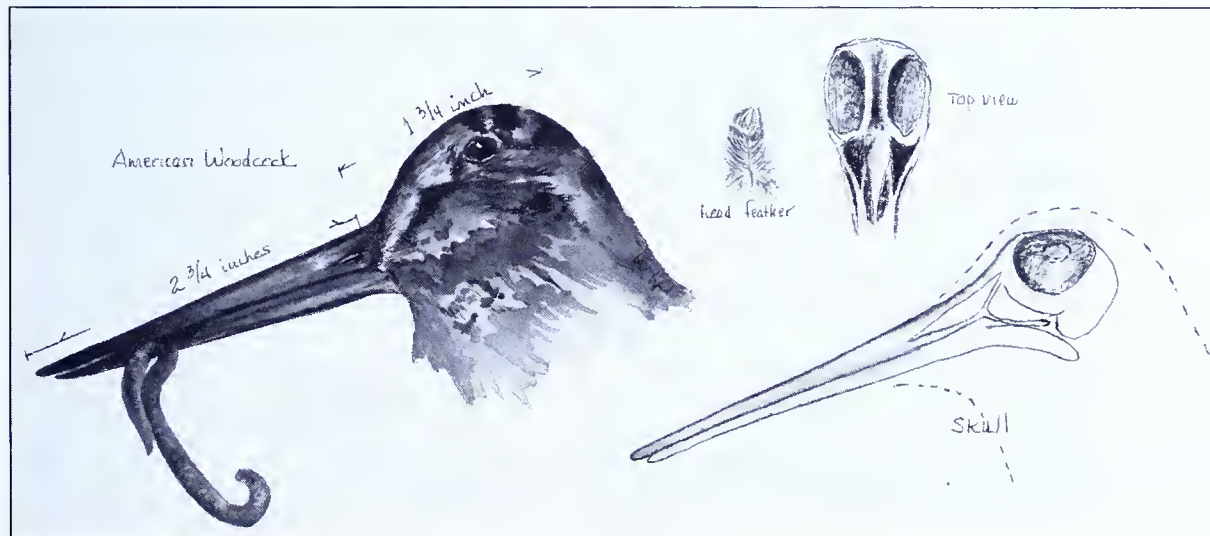
Woodcock, however, had flown in from somewhere — locally, Ontario, Quebec or wherever — and taken over the patch. It was wonderful. I shot one more time, at a woodcock Quill had deftly pointed in a thicket that Wendy couldn't penetrate. Otherwise, it was a watching game for me, hoping my guests would connect. And connect they did.

Quill was making few mistakes. When she knows birds are around she changes her demeanor. Instead of running hard and at random, she slows her cadence and moves with deliberate purpose.

She can smell a bird from quite a distance, and points when she does. That's a good attribute for grouse, but not necessarily so for woodcock because they generally allow a dog to move within close range before flushing or running.

Still, Quill was shining. John shot two birds. Wendy missed a couple more. They were both reveling in the experience, but Wendy was frustrated with not connecting. Although she had plenty of hunting experience, I don't think she had ever encountered this type of action before.

I know how frustrating it is when flush after flush finds you always in the wrong position. You want to show you can do it, but the shots just aren't presented.



THE AMERICAN WOODCOCK, although related to shorebirds, is found throughout eastern North America. With its long, flexible bill, the woodcock feeds almost exclusively on earthworms. Woodcock numbers have declined in recent years, largely because of losses and changes to the forested wetland habitats the birds need to survive.

As we proceeded, following up yet another woodcock, a grouse flushed in front of John and me. We both shot at the same time, each not knowing the other had shot, and the bird dropped. Of course, we each bantered about and claimed that grouse as our own.

At the end of the cover Quill made game. Pointed. Moved ahead. Pointed again. Moved again. A runner, I thought, and in a perfect spot for a grouse. But it was a longbill that eventually showed us his feathers. Not an easy shot for John or Wendy. The follow-up led us back toward the truck.

Quill pointed, and as several times before, Wendy lamented that her Dolly hadn't figured this grouse/woodcock thing out yet. Quill edged forward, pointing again several times. A runner? Some say woodcock don't run. They're wrong.

When it flushed in front of Quill's point, Wendy's semi rang out. The woodcock folded. Wendy shouted. Then she screamed, "I got it! I got it!"

An End to Frustration

The frustration was over. Success was at hand. Time for some backslapping. But the hunt wasn't quite over. John headed for the truck to fetch his cameras. I told Wendy the spot I'd dropped the woodcock we couldn't find was just ahead.

We angled in that direction, whistling the dogs with us. "Dead bird, dead bird," I encouraged as we entered the area. I began scanning the brush and limbs around us, thinking the woodcock might have gotten hung up on a limb where the dogs couldn't catch its scent.

We looked again for long minutes, both of us encouraging the dogs to stay in close and sniff out the quarry we knew was there. I don't know how long I had been checking overhead brush and limbs before I realized Dolly's bell had gone silent.

I quickly turned and saw her only a few yards away, on point, nose turned down

Grouse Breasts in Sherry Cream Sauce

Ingredients

2 split breasts, skinned
1/2 cup flour
1/2 tsp. nutmeg
1/4 tsp. pepper
2 tbs. butter
1/4 cup dry sherry wine
1/2 cup heavy cream
1 small can ripe black olives
1 tsp. Accent

Pound breasts lightly. Combine flour, nutmeg, pepper and Accent. Dredge cutlets. In heavy skillet, melt butter and cook cutlets five minutes on each side to brown lightly. Simmer 15 to 20 minutes. Remove cutlets to warm platter. Add sherry to pan and cook one minute. Add cream and simmer. (Do not let mixture boil.) Return cutlets to skillet and simmer 15 minutes or until tender. Add olives one minute before serving.

Taken from **Pennsylvania Game Cookbook**, available from the Game Commission, Dept. MS, 2001 Elmerton Ave., Harrisburg, PA 17110-9797. Cost is \$4 plus tax.

within inches of the ground. Immediately, I knew she had found my bird. I took a step or two closer and saw the dead woodcock. What elation. Then Wendy saw it. Her Dolly was vindicated. More than vindicated, she was suddenly the canine star.

The worst thing that can happen to a bird hunter is to experience good dog work, make a tough but telling shot, but then not retrieve the bird. Dolly fixed all that. John was back with us shortly, camera in hand.

All told, it was quite a day, one none of us will ever forget.

Pennsylvania's Conservation Corps

Those who recall the old Civilian Conservation Corps can appreciate the sentiment that drives the current program — and how it will benefit the young people of the state.

By Ken Wolgemuth

Photos by author

MICHAEL TELATYCKI stands in the doorway of the addition being constructed at the Food & Cover Corps building on SGL 127 in Monroe County. Behind the 23-year-old, three other young men are busy installing heating vents in the newly spackled walls.

Telatycki, a high school dropout who had spent some time in jail on an assault charge, had come here nine months before with no work experience and few marketable skills. Now he's earned his General Educational Development (GED) diploma and picked up a hands-on knowledge of construction. He's talking about going to college.

He marvels at how things have turned out. "When I first got here, I said 'It'll never happen.' I figured either the building would never go up or I'd never last to see it go up," he said.

But the building is up, and he's still here — and his story neatly illustrates the dual benefits of the Pennsylvania Conservation Corps (PCC), a state-run program improving public facilities and private lives throughout Pennsylvania.

Modeled on the Civilian Conservation



CREW LEADERS like Warren Haskell impart valuable knowledge to PCC youths. The Game Commission has taken advantage of the program and has sponsored 31 PCC projects across the state — from erecting buildings to assembling nesting structures. He works here with Joseph Kaster and Jason Samsa.

Corps of the 1930s, the PCC is the second-largest program of its kind in the country. The corps is administered by the Dept. of Labor and Industry as part of PennSERVE, the Governor's Office of Citizen Service.

Gov. Robert Casey created PennSERVE in 1988 to encourage all Pennsylvanians — especially the young — to serve their communities. The idea behind PCC and other youth programs administered by PennSERVE is to offer "real projects for real people that pay off in better citizens, better workers and better communities," says Labor and Industry Secretary Tom Foley.

PCC members are men and women 18 to 25 years of age. Working in crews under the guidance of skilled crew leaders, they spend up to a year getting work experience, job training and minimum wage as they tackle substantial conservation and historic preservation projects. Since the program began in 1984, more than 10,500 corps members have undertaken some 550 projects statewide.

So far, the Game Commission has sponsored 31 PCC projects involving work at game farms and on game lands in 20 counties. The most recent of these were carried out between July 1992 and June 1993 at sites in Fayette, Fulton, Lawrence, Monroe, Montgomery and Perry counties.

In the course of these projects, six crew leaders and about 30 corps members established a pistol range, created wildlife habitat, assembled nesting structures, marked nearly 100 miles of boundary lines, built or renovated some 13 acres of pheasant-rearing facilities, planted upwards of 100,000 trees, and erected five new maintenance and storage buildings.

PCC crews in the field consistently vali-

date one of the youth service community's most cherished axioms: The young people of today — contrary to much popular opinion — are not liabilities but assets; they should be viewed not as community problems but as community resources.

Even those who work most closely with PCC corps members are sometimes surprised by what inexperienced and supposedly "unskilled" young people can accomplish when given the chance.

"These guys constantly amaze me," says crew leader Steve Becker, who is in charge of the Monroe County project. "You give them a project, instruct them how to do it, tell them *why* you want it done a certain way, and they do a good job."

Jim Spotts, crew leader for the project at SGL 258 near Liverpool, Perry County, feels likewise. "It's amazing the talent some of these corps members have. They just need someone to guide them."

Spotts and his crew have been working for seven months. They have painted gates, planted seedlings, and repaired a barge used to ferry vehicles to Game Commission sites on islands in the Susquehanna River. Most of their time, however, has been devoted to constructing a 40x80-foot pole building, complete with office space, two large maintenance bays and a rodent-proof seed storage area.

Spotts has enrolled seven corps members since his project began. Three have since left the program — two of them because they took full-time jobs in the private sector. The four who remain represent a range of backgrounds and abilities, and it falls to the crew leader to mold such diverse individuals into a team capable of completing the task at hand.

Corps member Daniel Ferrell, Jr., for instance, came to the Perry County crew with nearly 10 years of experience in the construction field. Most of that experience was as a laborer, though, and Ferrell has set his sights on a more skilled position.

CORPS MEMBER Brian Hoffner installs a vent in an agency building. Although some have prior training, many PCC people have limited experience or education.



"I know a lot," he says, "but there's a lot more to learn. That's why I'm here. Jim takes time to teach us all he can. Other bosses, in the past, wouldn't take the time. They didn't want you to mess anything up because that cost them money. Jim explains instead of yelling."

At the other extreme, the only experience in Robert Weller's past was the shop class he took before dropping out of school in 11th grade. On discovering that Weller had trouble reading a tape measure, crew leader Spotts took a length of 2x4 and made an oversize ruler — one inch stretched out to a foot, with each fraction clearly labeled.

Day by day, in odd moments as the work permitted, the two practiced making measurements.

Today, Weller fishes the ruler out of a nearby trash can and shows it proudly to a visitor. "Jim said I couldn't throw it out until I knew it. Now I know it."

Land manager Clayton VanBuskirk is pleased with the results of the Perry County crew's labor. "I knew from the start that this was a training program, and that the building wouldn't go up in two weeks, or even six or eight weeks. I'm happy with the way it has worked out. . . . It will be a real useful addition for us. We've needed it for a long time."

All of the Game Commission projects will result in better habitat for wildlife or larger and more efficient facilities for those who manage wildlife. The ultimate beneficiaries of the work will be the hunters, hikers, bird watchers and other citizens who make use of game lands.

Game lands planning chief Jim Hyde

said: "The Game Commission, and all those who love nature, have greatly benefited by the work completed by these young men and women. The needs of wildlife and their habitats are better met through these efforts."

But the work is only half the story. The "products" of the Pennsylvania Conservation Corps include not only buildings and trails and nest boxes, but also people — young people who are more confident, more experienced, better skilled and better prepared to make their way in the world.

"Corps member development," as it is called, receives as much emphasis as project work. The training a corps member gets depends on his or her needs and goals, and upon what is available in the project area.

Some training is of the traditional classroom variety (remedial education leading to a GED, or vocational courses in carpentry, welding or other trades,

for instance), but much is of a less formal sort.

Guest speakers may be brought to the job site to discuss, for instance, resume writing, employment policies, safety or other subjects. Crews may take field trips to museums, fish hatcheries, correctional institutions, court houses and historical sites. They may also visit local employers — steel mills, lumber yards, factories and others — to learn what jobs are available in the community and what training is needed to get them.

Crews working on Game Commission projects are sometimes treated to unique educational opportunities: the chance to stock pheasants, for example, or to staff a



COMMISSION projects through PCC offer unique educational opportunities to crew members like Scott Hann — here planting seedlings on SGL 128. Projects such as these benefit youth, wildlife and the state's outdoorsmen and women.

THROUGH PCC, youths learn a sense of responsibility and self-worth. Leader Jim Spotts instructs Harvey Maneval III, Cory Willow, Robert Weller and Daniel Ferrell, Jr.

bear check station. Such experiences offer lessons both in wildlife management and in the fine art of community relations.

Corps member Brian Hoffner of Stroudsburg helped out at the bear check station in Monroe County last year. "The first thing the Game Commission officials told us is that every bear that comes in is a good bear," Brian says. "In other words, don't say it looks like a dog or something."

Important Lessons

Perhaps the most important lessons PCC has to teach are the simplest: the need to show up for work each day, to exercise self-control, to be reliable and to follow instructions, and the importance of looking beyond oneself and beyond today.

Corps member Harvey Maneval III is a 23-year-old single parent. According to his crew leader, Jim Spotts, when Maneval came to the corps he was quick to rile and indifferent toward work. "He couldn't get a job, couldn't work for free."

Seven months later, Maneval has turned things around. He's maintained a good work record and is pursuing his GED. His relatives have noticed a definite change for the better. He has noticed a change himself, and he credits the corps.

"This job helps keep me straight and out



of trouble," he says. "Now I'm starting to get a little bit of responsibility. . . . Since I started I find myself doing things I never did before — like keeping money in order and paying my bills."

According to estimates of what private contractors would charge to complete similar projects, the corps generates more than a dollar's worth of work for every state dollar invested. Clearly, there are returns — though less tangible and quantifiable — in human growth as well.

Crew leader Warren Haskell from Lawrence County puts it succinctly. "The more I see the PCC, the bigger it is. It's a lot more than just vocational skills. I see my job as developing citizens."

WANTED: A FEW GOOD MEN AND WOMEN

THE PENNSYLVANIA Conservation Corps operates more than 60 projects throughout the state. PCC crews are working on state game lands, at historical sites, and in state parks, state forests and local municipalities. New corps members are always needed.

If you are a Pennsylvania resident between 18 and 25 years of age, and are interested in performing needed community service work while improving your skills and earning a wage, the corps may be for you. For more information, visit your local Job Center or call the PCC office at (717) 783-3833.

The corps also needs skilled crew leaders. The ideal crew leader candidate is a man or woman with some experience in the construction field and the desire to work with and train young adults. To get more information on becoming a crew leader, call the PCC office at the number listed above.



FIELD NOTES



If Only . . .

POTTER COUNTY — Frank Mitchel and his wife were having problems with a bear tearing down their bird feeders. Bob Miller and I set a trap, and the next morning Frank found the trap door closed. He peeked through the holes and saw something brown inside. Before he could call us, Frank's brother called wanting to know if he'd seen his dog; it hadn't come home that night. Sure enough, the lost dog was in the trap. Frank says the dog used to make regular stops there for handouts, but now it makes a wide detour. If only we could get the bears we trap to do that. — WCO Butch Camp, Ulysses.

With Great Dispatch

LYCOMING COUNTY — They work long shifts, day and night, with a pen in one hand and a phone stuck to their ear while the other ear monitors radio traffic from WCOs and the other hand works keyboards and consoles. Our dispatchers field questions on wildlife, hunting, law, forestry, recreation and a host of subjects not related to Commission activities. They solve a lot of problems over the phone, saving us a lot of work. Without the dispatchers, the agency couldn't possibly function as well as it does. — WCO Terry D. Wills, Williamsport.

Respect

ERIE COUNTY — Now that dove season is here, I want to urge sportsmen and women to respect other people's properties. Observe Safety Zone restrictions and watch your zones of fire when shooting doves, just as in any other hunting. — WCO Jack Farster, Albion.

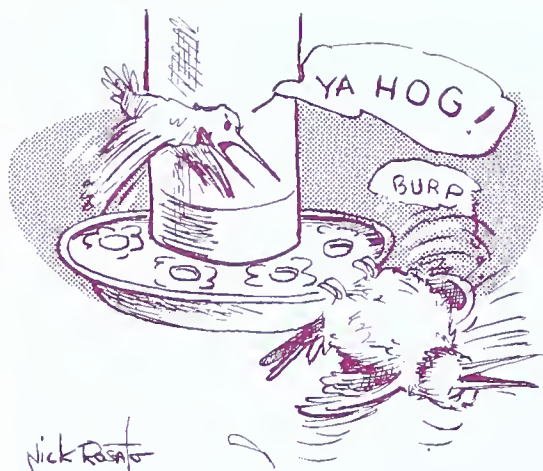
Caught in the Crossfire

TRAINING SCHOOL — One of the oldest rules in hunting is to always identify your target, and the axiom had special meaning after our first trip to the firing range. After scoring our second round of combat shooting, one target had 54 holes instead of 50. It seems one of my classmates should remember this: Always identify *your* target. — Trainee Douglas E. Dunkerley, Harrisburg.



You've Got to See This

INDIANA COUNTY — Last spring I began using a decoy for turkey hunting, and one morning I spied a fox working toward me as I called. It didn't see the decoy at first, but as it cut around an oak tree it came nose to nose with the fake. The fox backedpedaled furiously, then sprang onto a stump. It studied the decoy for at least a minute, head bobbing and weaving, then continued down the hill — giving the decoy a wide berth. Before long the fox was back, this time with a friend. They went back to the same stump and both sat and intently watched the decoy for a while before leaving. — WCO A.S. Hamley, Beyer.



Norm!

ADAMS COUNTY — A male ruby-throated hummingbird has been visiting my parents' feeder, and it's amazing how much he can drink. Once he was so full he nearly fell backwards off his perch. He's certainly the fattest hummingbird I've ever seen, and it wasn't hard to name him after the *Cheers* character. — WCO Larry Haynes, Gettysburg.

Field Representatives

TRAINING SCHOOL — A little while back we watched a video featuring a debate between sport hunters and anti-hunters. I thought it interesting that antis referred to hunters and poachers as one in the same. Remember, every time you're in the field you represent the entire sporting community; your actions are under more scrutiny now than ever. — Trainee Scott W Tomlinson, Harrisburg.

Dumped

TRAINING SCHOOL — The Fish and Boat Commission recently instructed us in water safety rescue, boat safety and boating regulations. We got to try many types of water craft, and we did a canoe float trip on the Susquehanna — with the chance to do a little fishing. If anyone finds a Daiwa Minicast rod and reel and a canoe paddle with a Fish and Boat Commission decal, please contact me. — Trainee Joe Wenzel, Harrisburg.

Off the Hook

WAYNE COUNTY — At a recent meeting of farmers and sportsmen, the topic turned to deer management. The farmers wanted the herd trimmed; the sportsmen wanted more animals. As the discussion heated up, all eyes turned to me. I desperately tried to remember what the training school had taught me about thinking quickly under pressure. "When do we eat?" I blurted out. It worked. In a matter of minutes the meeting room cleared as everyone headed for the dining room. — WCO Frank J. Dooley, Moscow.

They Don't Mix

TRAINING SCHOOL — Just a reminder that alcohol and hunting don't mix. Alcohol is a depressant that affects concentration and impairs judgment — even after just one drink. Hunters have an admirable record of not spoiling their activities by drinking. Keep it up. — Trainee Christopher B. Grudi, Harrisburg.

Trains Kill

CAMERON COUNTY — A yearling elk that occasionally visited my yard was recently hit by a train. Her death is a reminder of the amount of wildlife killed on the tracks. While highway kills are visible, rail kills occur where they're not often seen. Quite a few animals are killed by trains each year, another example of how humans and our activities can be deadly to wildlife. — WCO Joe Carlos, Driftwood.

It Won't Work (Now)

BRADFORD COUNTY — While discussing the new trainee class, WCO Bill Bower said for the next few months there'll be more competition to get Field Notes in. Bill, a 25-year veteran, figured one of the best ways to ensure that his notes would continue to be published will be to put "Trainee" in front of his name. — WCO Richard P. Larned, Warren Center.

Tuckered Out?

CLARION COUNTY — LMO Ed Zindell and I competed at the Pennsylvania Police Olympics back in June. One interesting event is the Toughest Cop Around competition, which features a 3-mile run, shotput toss, 100-yard dash, 100-yard swim, 20-foot rope climb, bench press, pull-ups and an obstacle course. Ed captured the silver medal in the Senior Master Division, and I was fortunate enough to win the gold. I don't know about Ed, but I slept really well the night after the competition. — WCO Alan C. Scott, Cressona.

Migrating Crayfish?

ALLEGHENY COUNTY — WCOs are treated to many unusual wildlife sightings, and I recently saw one of the strangest. On a trip to SGL 223 in Greene County I watched a large crayfish cross the road. I had just returned from vacation, and I certainly didn't think I'd be needing another so soon. — WCO R.T. Cramer, White Oak.



Crossing Guard

FOREST COUNTY — On my way to Mt. Jewett I saw an unusual sight that caused traffic to back up on Route 66. Five adult bears were crossing the road, and the largest of them — about a 450-pounder — seemed to be in charge. It stood on the road until the other four had crossed. — WCO Alfred N. Pedder, Marienville.



Lost and Found

I was checking habitat conditions on a game lands recently, and as I looked at a plowed sharecropper's field I found an unfinished arrowhead. It gave me a great feeling, and I almost sensed the presence of the person who'd worked on it thousands of years ago. I wondered if it had been left behind or if it had been lost. I hope that thousands of years from now someone finds the folding Buck knife I lost there and wonders the same things. — LMO R.H. Muir, Kittanning.

All in the Family

CHESTER COUNTY — I received a unique honor at last June's Commission meeting when I was allowed to present a 25-year award to WCO Leo C. Yahner. I'm privileged to have an uncle who has served wildlife and the people of the commonwealth for a quarter-century. I hope he can return the favor in about 23 years. — WCO Dan Yahner, Honey Brook.

Home, Safe Home

In a remote area of SGL 39, we have a metal gate on an access road. The lock box lid fits poorly, leaving about a half-inch gap when it's closed. In each of the past four years, a house wren has made a nest in the lock box. She always constructs her nest in such a way that we can open and close the gate with minimal disturbance to her household. — LMO James Deniker, Sandy Lake.

Great Success

NORTHAMPTON COUNTY — I'd like to thank those involved in the county's field day, especially event chairman Martin Bortz. Stockertown Rod and Gun Club was the host site, and 200 kids attended. The event's great success was due in large part to the adult volunteers and the support of local businesses and sportsmen's clubs. — WCO James F. Jolley, Pennsville.

Inseparable

LEHIGH COUNTY — While trying to trap a nuisance bear we came up with a lactating sow — not the animal we were after. An observer was concerned the bear wouldn't be able to find her cubs because they'd been separated for more than a day. His worries were unfounded. We caught the same female a half-mile away the next day, her three cubs in a tree beside the trap. — WCO D.E. Mitchell, Fogelsville.



Was It Loaded?

WESTMORELAND COUNTY — Deputy Stephen Sarracino was traveling Route 31 when he saw a pickup suddenly brake and pull off the road. Steve moved in behind the truck, and he watched as the driver pointed what appeared to be a gun at a flock of 15 turkeys feeding in a field. Steve cautiously approached, only to find the driver holding a rifle stock with a camera mounted on it. — WCO Joseph V. Stefko, Greensburg.

High Jump

While working with Gary Glick on a timber sale on SGL 35 last summer, we stumbled upon a rattlesnake den. We watched in amazement as four big rattlers moved around us. One uncoiled from a patch of ferns I'd just been standing next to. As we were walking out at quitting time, I couldn't help but laugh as Gary found a fifth rattlesnake lying across the trail. When they met, the snake quickly departed and Gary made a world-class high jump. — Forester James E. Reap, Avoca.

Til Your Night Job Pays

CENTRE COUNTY — When I give programs to school groups I usually draw pictures on the blackboard. Drawing is not one of my strong points, and I joke with the kids about my abilities. After presenting a habitat program to the Liberty-Curtin Elementary School in Blanchard, I got interesting comments from two students. One future psychologist told me I could become a good artist if I really believed in myself, and another said I really was a good artist but "Don't give up your day job." — WCO George F. Mock, Coburn.

Innovator

ELK COUNTY — It's often difficult to get illegal ATVs to stop for us, and at times they escape on trails we can't get our trucks through. But Deputies Chuck Carlson and Jim Urey may have hit upon a new technique. They were after three riders, and Chuck managed to maneuver his vehicle next to the last one. His loud shouting must've startled the operator because he jumped off the ATV — the engine still running — and threw his hands into the air. Then Chuck hopped on the guy's machine and caught up to the other two. The pair was so surprised to see a uniformed officer behind them instead of their buddy that they surrendered. — WCO Dick Bodenhorn, Ridgway.

Service Honored

PHILADELPHIA COUNTY — The Commission recently honored George McCann of Huntingdon Valley as an honorary deputy WCO. George has devoted much of his life to fighting for our rights as hunters and shooters, battling Philadelphia bills that threatened gun ownership. He has been a deputy here for many years, and I want to congratulate him for his outstanding service to conservation. — WCO Richard J. Shire, Philadelphia.

Do Your Part

Millions of acres are open to hunting because of public access coopeators, and you can do your part in thanking them by: always asking permission to hunt; treating the property as if it were your own; observing posted signs; staying away from livestock; not entering Safety Zones; and cleaning up litter. — LMO Bruce C. Metz, Spinnerstown.

Relocating a Nuisance

MERCER COUNTY — While a group of us were rounding up nuisance geese at a campground, a camper came up to ask WCO Len Hribar if he was in charge. "No," Lenny said. "What gave you that idea?" The man said he assumed Lenny was the leader because he was making the most noise. We all agreed with the camper and discussed sending Lenny off to Mississippi with the rest of the nuisance wildlife. — WCO Jim Donatelli, Mercer.

Volunteer for Wildlife

SULLIVAN COUNTY — Pennsylvania has several programs through which people can help clean up roads and streams. The Commission has a project called Volunteers for Wildlife that can accomplish cleanups and more. I also think people could "adopt" a landowner in the same way. It's up to us to work on the lands we enjoy — both public and private. — WCO Barry R. Hambley, LaPorte.

Violators Beware

SOMERSET COUNTY — As game law violators become more sophisticated, so does wildlife law enforcement. We now can use DNA testing to tie traces of wildlife such as blood, hair, bone, feathers or tissue to game found in, say, a person's freezer. This technique helps us solve cases in which wildlife was illegally killed. — WCO C.E. Guindon, Boswell.



How to Coexist

INDIANA COUNTY — Solutions for nuisance wildlife problems are often simple and inexpensive. Generally, our backyards and porches are attractive to animals for two reasons — either there's something for them to eat or somewhere for them to hide. Check the area around your home for food sources or convenient hiding spots. Of course, this assumes that you don't want to share your space with wild creatures; peaceful coexistence works, too. — WCO M.A. Schake, Indiana.

Good Indications

BERKS COUNTY — If the past spring is any indicator, there should be good numbers of pheasants around this fall. During the spring crowing count survey I heard 25 cockbirds; on the same route last year I heard only five. Let's hope the trend continues. — WCO Chuck Lincoln, Reading.

Commission Classifies Coyotes As Furbearers

Change ends Sunday hunting for coyotes; Commissioners learn about agency activities in Pocono area during 'road trip.'

THE EASTERN COYOTE, formerly classified as a protected mammal in Pennsylvania, is now considered a furbearer for the purposes of hunting and trapping. The Commission finalized the change at its summer meeting in Blooming Grove on July 12.

The change in classification means coyotes may no longer be hunted on Sundays, but there still is no closed season on them. The licensing requirements are unchanged. Coyotes may be hunted with a hunting license or hunted and trapped with a furtaker license.

The 1993-94 digest of state hunting and trapping regulations that comes with hunting and furtaker licenses does not reflect this recent decision.

The coyote was reclassified because in its former status no parts of the animal (such as the hide) could be sold. As a protected mammal it also could not be legally trapped nor could it be chased with dogs.

"Classing the coyote as a furbearer puts it in its proper place," said law enforcement director J.R. Fagan. "As more sportsmen take up the challenge of pursuing these

animals, it's our duty to ensure the taking of coyotes falls in line with Game and Wildlife Code regulations."

The Commission action came at a brief business meeting that was part of a three-day "road trip" work session hosted by the Northeast Region July 11-13.

The itinerary began Sunday with the dedication of a new game lands in Pike County — SGL 316, also known as the Mastwood property. SGL 316 is a 2,700-acre tract with 2½ miles of Delaware River frontage; its purchase was approved by the Commission last September.

The acquisition was made possible by a land lease agreement with the Fisher Mining Company and with help from the federal government in the form of Pittman-Robertson funds.

The mining firm assisted the purchase to the tune of more than \$1 million in return for a 10-year

lease to mine and remove coal from SGL 75 in Lycoming County. The company has been operating a surface mining operation there, one in which it is also performing acid mine drainage abatement work. Abandoned mines on the property are being



AS THEY threw back the cover, Executive Director Pete Duncan and Commissioner Ed Vogue officially dedicated the Mastwood property as SGL 316.

Conservation News

“daylighted” and pools of polluted mine water are being eliminated, benefiting miles of area streams.

Because the purchase price of the Mastwood tract — \$3.75 million, nearly \$1,400 per acre — was more than the Commission is authorized to pay, the agency also supplemented Game Fund monies with federal dollars.

The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, which administers Pittman-Robertson funds, reimbursed the agency for 75 percent of the remaining obligation (approximately \$1.6 million). In the end, the Commission paid about \$1.1 million for Mastwood.

SGL 316, located in Lackawaxen Township, contains about 200 acres of reverting fields and 130 acres of wetlands. Aside from Delaware River frontage, SGL 316 also has a 46-acre lake and several streams.

As was pointed out several times during the dedication ceremonies, land in the Pocono region is particularly vulnerable to development; Pike County is considered part of the greater

New York City metropolitan area by the U.S. Census Bureau. Perhaps nowhere in the state is wildlife habitat disappearing as fast, and acquisitions such as SGL 316 are vital to preserving wild lands.

Executive Director Pete Duncan said there is perhaps a 10-year window remaining for the agency to buy land, citing rising costs and dwindling availability of real estate.

“When people look back on this period in the Commission’s history, they’re going to be grateful that the agency aggressively pursued land acquisitions,” Duncan told the gathering at Mastwood.

Following the business meeting Monday morning, Commissioners, staff and the public toured SGL 180, Shohola Lake.

Shohola is one of two sites used to hack bald eagles in the Commission’s bald eagle recovery plan, which was completed in 1989. The plan returned nesting bald eagle pairs to the Delaware and Susquehanna watersheds, one of its aims.

For seven years beginning in 1982, the agency captured eagles in Saskatchewan and then hacked eaglets from hacking towers at Shohola and at Haldeman Island in Dauphin County. The project was a success, and today Pennsylvania has 16 nesting pairs.

After seeing the eagle hacking tower



LEE HARSHBARGER, federal aid supervisor, discusses nesting pole drop plans with a chopper crewman. Below, the helicopter moves in to pick up the pole after the first drop.



and observation area, the visitors had the opportunity to watch a nesting pole drop.

Although it was originally hoped bald eagles would use the artificial nesting devices, they never showed much interest — preferring to nest in shoreline trees instead. Ospreys do like the poles, though; 80 percent of osprey nesting involves artificial structures.

The devices are utility poles to which large saucer-shaped nesting frames made of wire, rebar stakes and saplings are affixed. The bottom of the pole is tapered to a point to help set it into a lake or pond bottom when dropped from the air.

National Guard choppers and crews are usually enlisted for the drops. A cable is attached to the pole, and during pickup a crewman in the belly of the helicopter uses a “shepherd pole” to snare the cable. At the drop site, the pilot maneuvers into position and the pole is released, driving itself into the lake bottom.

Well, that’s the way it’s supposed to work anyway.

Apparently, the pole used in this particular drop wasn’t balanced quite right to give the desired “lawn dart” effect. On the first drop the pole went in at an angle, so the fliers picked it up again. The pole turned on the second drop and splashed horizontally into the water, bending the nesting cage.

While staff good-naturedly assured the crowd that things like that were bound to happen when everyone is watching, an eagle — as if on cue — circled overhead.

The remainder of Monday was given to more tours of SGL 180. Included was a demonstration of a Bell saw, a highly maneuverable three-wheeled vehicle that saws and removes trees; some timber operators are using the Bell. Other stops featured grouse and rabbit management, scrub oak management, timber sales, and clover planting.

Clover is not something most people give much thought to. It grows in lawns and fields, produces white or purple flowers, and sometimes has four leaves. But clover has become big business for some; it is often advertised as a way of producing trophy bucks.

The land management bureau took some time to explain clover basics to tour-goers. Staff cited a study in which Ladino clover, the kind used on game lands wildlife food plots, was compared to Imperial clover, a heavily marketed strain.

The study found little difference between the two, but Ladino costs about a third less.

“We don’t want to discourage anyone from buying and planting clover,” said Jim Hyde, chief of game lands planning and development. “Before Imperial became so visible, few people bothered to plant anything, and we’re certainly behind every effort to plant food for wildlife.”

Tuesday morning brought the trip to a close, but not before members of the Environmental Planning and Habitat Protection Division trotted out some maps and easels for one last seminar — this one held at the Blooming Grove Hunting and Fishing Club.

While it sometimes seems highway planners go out of their way to cut roads through our favorite forests or fields, environmental concerns rank surprisingly high on their priority list.

Division staff guided the audience through the agency’s review procedures. Using the proposed Lackawanna Valley Industrial Highway as an example, Roland Bergner showed how Environmental Impact Statements and critical habitats influence roadways.

The agency uses on-ground surveys and high tech mapping to identify areas that shouldn’t be disturbed. The Commission is instrumental in choosing highway route alternatives that lessen impacts on wildlife habitat. — *J. Scott Rupp, text and photos*

Crossbow, spotting legislation passes

The legislature recently passed a law that liberalizes the application process for certain disabled people who want to hunt with a crossbow. Another piece of legislation changed slightly the regulations concerning spotlighting.

Those who are permanently disabled and unable to draw a bow in a normal manner may apply to the Commission for a permit to hunt with a crossbow or a bow held in place by a brace secured around the body or which is triggered with the aid of a mechanical device.

The legislation amends the Game and Wildlife Code so that a permit shall be issued to any person who presents a doctor's certificate showing that he or she is unable to hunt with a conventional bow because of a permanent physical condition.

The law also requires that a crossbow of no less than 125 pounds and not more than 200 pounds be used to hunt deer, bear or turkey. Crossbow arrows, known as "bolts," must be tipped with a broadhead not less than 7/8-inch and have a minimum of two immovable, exposed cutting edges.

Sportsmen and women seeking additional information or an application should contact the Commission region office in their area. Toll-free numbers to the regions are published in each issue of *Game News*.

Recent legislation also addressed spotlighting regulations. The penalty for violating recreational spotlighting laws is now standardized at \$100, and it is now unlawful to cast the rays of a spotlight, vehicle headlight or any other light upon photoelectric cells.

Biathlon takes stage at Scotia

A summer biathlon competition will be held at Scotia Range on Sept. 19. The race, a part of the Kingsbury National Series, is open to the public.

Summer biathlon mates running and shooting. The race is five kilometers (about three miles). After each mile loop, competitors shoot five shots with a .22 rimfire at metal knock-down targets. Misses result in time penalties.

First-time participants must attend a safety clinic prior to the race. One clinic will be held Sept. 18 at 6 p.m. on the range, and another will be held on the range at 9 a.m. on race day.

The summer biathlon national championships are also being held at Scotia. That competition will take place Oct. 9. For more information, contact the Northcentral Region office at (800) 422-7551.

Middle Creek activity schedule

Lectures at the Middle Creek Wildlife Management Area Visitors Center, located near Kleinfeltersville, begin at 7:30 p.m.

The last lecture scheduled for Middle Creek is "Pennsylvania's River Otters" by Tom Serfass, otter restoration project coordinator, Sept. 15-16. On Sept. 11-12, Middle Creek will host its annual wildfowl show featuring art and decoy carvings, and the annual decoy judging contest. The show runs 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. both days. Admission is free.

PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES who require special assistance at Game Commission public functions should contact the telephone number listed with the announcement, the appropriate region office or the Harrisburg headquarters. Toll-free numbers for each region are listed in every issue of *Game News*; the Harrisburg number is (717) 787-4250.

DEER HIGHWAY MORTALITY

HIGHWAY	42,539
ILLEGALS	3,013
CROP DAMAGE	3,534
DOGS	118
OTHER	531

TOTAL DEER MORTALITY 49,735

WRCF license plate available soon

Pennsylvanians will soon be able to display their support for the state's wildlife by purchasing a new motor vehicle license plate that promotes the Wild Resource Conservation Fund.

The attractive new plate features a black and white saw-whet owl on a green hemlock bough against an orange and yellow background. The message "Conserve Wild Resources" is emblazoned in black.

The new license plate will cost \$35, \$15 of which goes to WRCF. Plate buyers must also pay annual registration fees. Orders will be accepted beginning in October; delivery is anticipated to take six to eight weeks.

The plate may be purchased at any time, not just when it's time to renew a motor vehicle registration. A replacement sticker with the same expiration date as the existing sticker will accompany the new plate.



Similar license plate sales across the nation have been popular, and this new plate is expected to be especially successful. WRCF has depended solely on tax check-offs and private and business contributions for its operating budget — it receives no general fund monies.

WRCF invests in projects such as river otter restoration and peregrine falcon reintroduction.

An application for the plate may be acquired through the fund (Box 8764, Harrisburg, PA 17105) or PennDOT.

Roads open to hunters with disabilities

The Game Commission, Dept. of Environmental Resources' Bureau of State Forests, the Allegheny National Forest and the Army Corps of Engineers each year open roads to hunters with disabilities. Sportsmen and women must first obtain a disabled permit from the Game Commission (contact the nearest region office) to hunt on any of these roads. People with disabilities are permitted to hunt from their vehicles.

A permittee may be accompanied by only one person, and that person must possess a valid Pennsylvania hunting license. Vehicles must be off the roadway, at a complete stop and with the motor turned off before a firearm may be loaded. Only one firearm in the vehicle is allowed to be loaded, and only the permittee may fire a gun or bow or crossbow.

ROADS OPEN TO HUNTERS WITH DISABILITIES

GAME LANDS

Game Commission roads are listed by game lands with counties in parentheses. Contact the appropriate region office for the specific roads opened.

SGL 100 (Berks & Schuylkill)
SGL 117 (Washington)
SGL 12 (Bradford & Sullivan)
SGL 49 (Bedford & Fulton)
SGL 244 (Jefferson)
SGL 134 (Lycoming & Sullivan)
SGL 210 (Dauphin)
SGL 59 (McKean & Potter)
SGL 37 (Tioga)

ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers roads are listed by projects with counties in parentheses. Contact the office for a particular project or call the Corps' Pittsburgh district office.

Shenango (Mercer)
Conemaugh (Indiana & Westmoreland)
Loyalhanna (Westmoreland)
Mahoning (Armstrong)
Crooked Creek (Armstrong)
Tionesta (Forest)

STATE FORESTS

State forest roads are listed by road with state forests and counties in parentheses. Contact DER's Bureau of State Forests for specific road boundaries.

Dead Womans Hollow (Michaux SF, Adams & Cumberland)
Bower Mountain (Tuscarora SF, Perry)
Longfellow (Tuscarora SF, Mifflin)

continued next page

ROADS OPEN TO HUNTERS WITH DISABILITIES

STATE FORESTS (cont.)

Unnamed, Trough Creek area (Rothrock SF, Huntingdon)
Unnamed, Stone Mountain area (Rothrock SF, Huntingdon)
Sand Knob Shale Pit (Rothrock SF, Huntingdon)
Unnamed, Black Gap area (Bald Eagle SF, Centre)
Unnamed (Kittanning SF, Forest)
Mohawk Trail (Moshannon SF, Clearfield)
Middle Hill (Tiadaghton SF, Lycoming)
South Dividing Ridge (Elk SF, Cameron)
Unnamed, Denton Hill area (Susquehannock SF, Potter)
Rexford Trail (Tioga SF, Tioga)
Lukes Trail (Weiser SF, Dauphin)
Place (Delaware SF, Pike)
High Rock Run Spur (Wyoming SF, Sullivan)

ALLEGHENY NATIONAL FOREST

ANF roads are listed by road number with ANF district and county in parentheses. For information, write Forest Supervisor, Box 847, Warren PA 16365, or call (814) 723-5150.

FR 458, 458A & 332A (Ridgway, Elk)
FR 226 (Marienville, Forest)
FR 255 & 255A (Sheffield, Warren)
FR 479 (Bradford, McKean)

SPORT essay contest underway for '94

The Commission's SPORT Essay Contest is open to hunting-age youths across the state. This year's theme is "Respect for my sport — What it means to me and how it affects others."

The contest awards winners in senior (ages 16 to 18) and junior (12 to 15) categories. It is open to Pennsylvania residents who have completed a hunter education course and possess a

current hunting or furtaker license.

This contest's senior winner will receive a Savage Arms .270 rifle, and the junior winner will get a Savage .22 Hornet/20-gauge.

For information and complete contest rules, write the Commission in care of SPORT Essay Contest, 2001 Elmerton Ave., Harrisburg, PA 17110-9797.

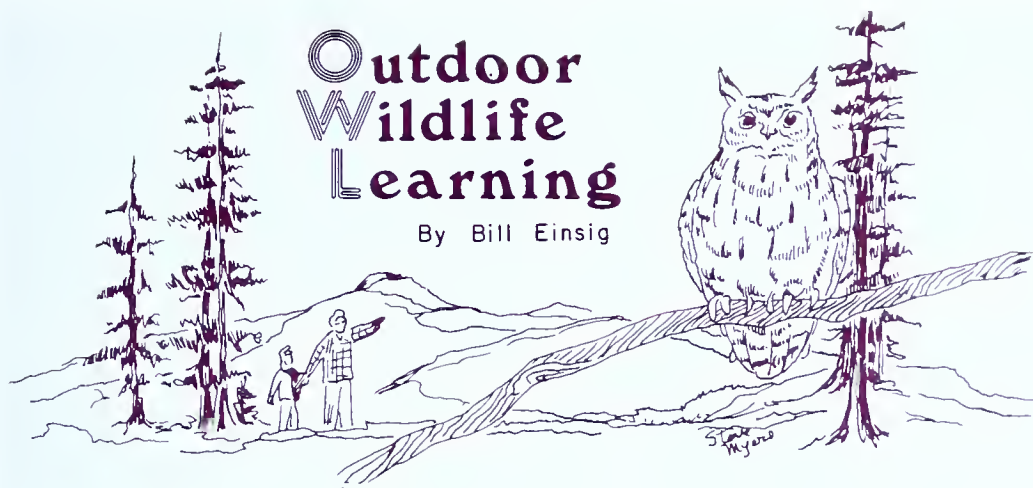
SGL 110, 211 vehicle tours slated

Each year the Commission sponsors public vehicle tours of two Southeast Region game lands — SGLs 211 and 110. This year the tours will be held Oct. 10.

The SGL 110 tour will begin at the game lands parking lot on Mountain Road, which is located midway between the Shartlesville exit of I-78

and Route 61. The tour terminates on Route 183 north of Strausstown. The tour begins at 9 a.m. and the gate will close at 3 p.m.

The SGL 211 tour will begin at the Ellendale gate northeast of Dauphin. It ends at Gold Mine Road southwest of Tower City. Times are the same as SGL 110's.



Teachers Turn to New Bird Atlas

EARLY THIS YEAR, after seven years of painstaking field work, tedious number crunching and careful analysis, the *Atlas of Breeding Birds in Pennsylvania* was published.

Birding enthusiasts across the state have already hailed the publication as a landmark effort that will revitalize interest in Pennsylvania's bird life and ultimately help us understand the factors that cause fluctuations of each nesting species.

But while professional and amateur birders welcome this highly readable source of new information, another group of citizens will also put this book to hard use. They are biology teachers.

The Atlas is not a textbook, a lab manual or a biology curriculum guide. But it does provide some of the most current information available on a major part of Pennsylvania's wildlife. It is rich in opportunities for studying real science.

Most of the 484-page book consists of species accounts for the approximately 200 birds known to breed here. Each account includes a range map depicting the distribu-

tion of the breeding sites observed during the study period from 1983 through 1989.

There is also a well-written summary of the data on each species along with a graphic breakdown of the number of sightings from each physiographic province. For some species that have sufficient data to allow it, there are graphs of population trends from the last 25 years, based on information from the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service.

Obviously, this book offers a wealth of information on the breeding status of every Pennsylvania bird. Biology teachers should have this work as a key reference for their own use as well as a reference for students. Textbooks cannot match the current information on local distribution of nesting birds offered in the Atlas. However, another section of the book actually proved more exciting to me as a teacher than the species accounts.

The authors and editor Daniel Brauning could have given us an Atlas without documenting the methods used to collect and analyze data. I'm sure it would have been easy to leave the technical stuff out of a book intended for a general audience.

They chose instead to include the methodology and, by doing that, they've given readers more insight into the scientific enterprise than most science textbooks.

The process of collecting data for the Atlas is an outstanding example of how science works. As teachers, we need to emphasize research methodology at least as much as we stress results and conclusions.

Science courses must be more than an accumulation of facts — which are often quickly forgotten by many students. The courses must also model the processes of science that investigate, analyze and confirm the "facts." Understanding the nature of scientific inquiry is ultimately far more important than the facts themselves.

Another facet of the Atlas I particularly enjoy is the transparent overlays that accompany the book. The overlays depict elevations, forest community type, precipitation patterns and, among other geographic factors, physiographic provinces for the entire state.

There are eight different overlays that augment the breeding map in the species accounts. Students, or any reader, can place an overlay on any map and look for correlations between a bird's distribution and the feature depicted by the overlay.

For example, placing the land use overlay on the distribution map for the barred owl shows that most sightings of this raptor were from heavily forested areas. By contrast, doing the same with the map for barn owls shows a decided preference for more open land.

This is basic knowledge to most birders but it isn't to most students. Having a resource such as the Atlas available enables teachers to pose thought-provoking questions requiring more than simple recall of facts. For example:

1. Compare the distribution of three game birds — wild turkey, ruffed grouse and bobwhite. (Wild turkey and ruffed grouse have similar distributions throughout the forested regions of the state. Bobwhite, on the other hand, are found chiefly in the southeast corner where the grouse and turkey are not abundant.)

Have a question for Mr. OWL to answer? Send it to Dear Mr. OWL, Pennsylvania Game News, 2001 Elmerton Ave., Harrisburg, PA 17110-9797.

2. The wood duck is one of wildlife management's success stories. What factors led to the decline of this population and what efforts supported its return? (By the early 1900s the wood duck was nearly exterminated in Pennsylvania, due to unrestricted market hunting and extensive logging of prime habitat. Regulated hunting, habitat protection and artificial nesting structures have all helped the wood duck gain its position as the second most common breeding duck in Pennsylvania.)

3. Great egrets nest in a limited area of Pennsylvania. Where is that area and why is the largest nesting colony in danger? (Great egret nests were found in the freshwater tidal marshes of the Delaware River, in the extreme southeast corner of the state, and along the southern end of the Susquehanna River. The largest colony, on Wade Island near Harrisburg, is threatened by the city's proposal to build a low-head dam across the river. Higher water levels above the dam would endanger nesting areas.)

4. The northern flicker is Pennsylvania's most common woodpecker and is distributed throughout the state. But flicker populations have been declining at an alarming rate. Why? (Competition with starlings for nest sites seems to be the major factor causing the decrease in flicker abundance.)

5. More than 2000 volunteers helped collect data for the Atlas project. Did these volunteers actually find nests for every bird at every location? (No. In most cases, nesting activity was based on observations of bird behaviors associated with nesting. For example, adults carrying nesting material, fecal sacs or food for young are evidence of nesting.)

The Atlas — ISBN (0-8229-3692-5) — is available from local bookstores or from CUP Services, Box 6525, Ithaca, NY 14851, (800-666-2211). Cost is \$34.95 plus \$3 shipping.



SWAMPS are easy to get lost in, so hunters and other outdoorspeople should exercise care and caution when entering them. But swamps are also home to many kinds of animals, including trophy whitetails, making it worthwhile for those willing to wade right in.

Swamps

SWAMP! Even the word is the sound of mudsucking at a hunting boot. Swamps are a boon and bane to the hunter, a place for game, and gunners, to get lost in. Sometimes or other in their outdoor pursuits, most hunters wind up in one, perhaps deeper than they'd planned.

Although Pennsylvania has its share of swamps, bogs, mires and marshes, I first met these wet spots, under hunting season conditions, in southern New Jersey. The vast swamps of the Pine Barrens are legendary, but my husband, brother and I didn't know that. We were used to Pennsylvania hills, where if you become confused in your whereabouts, you just follow ridge lines or head downstream.

Not so in the Pine Barrens. Becoming

disoriented there is more than adventure. We knew there were deer in Wharton State Forest, the tract that fills the southcentral part of the state, and we were bowhunting them. On a Saturday, we found our hunting spots occupied, so we naively

Another View...

by Linda Steiner

walked a footpath back into the bush. The sandy path became a game trail that meandered through the flats. The only landmark was the sun so, Pennsylvania style, we decided to keep the orb on our left shoulder until we reached a dirt road on the other side of the woods square.

What we hadn't counted on was the swamp. First there were a few marshy spots, then the blackwater bog was all around us. We stayed on what high ground we could find, fighting our way through the scrubby pines and oaks, blueberry brush, and tangled greenbrier.

We kicked out three or four whitetails and followed them. We weren't in hunting pursuit, but we knew that by trailing them we could keep on hummocks of dry ground. Surely we should stumble onto a woods road soon. How big could New Jersey be?

A huge chain pickerel darted away alligator-like in the dark water, and the shadows and entwining branches made me think of late night "swamp monster" movies. Lost in the wilderness, in one of the most populous states in the nation? Impossible, but we were ready to declare ourselves so. It was still afternoon, but I began to imagine what it would be like to spend the night in a mosquito plagued bog.

That's when we saw the tree stand. Like a beacon of hope, it stood tall on the far side of a wet slough. The tree stand meant hunters had access to the far side of the swamp, so there was a chance of finding civilization again.

We waded in, sunk knee deep in the muck, and helped each other across. We

pushed through the brushy edge and popped out under the tree stand. "We got out, we got out," we laughed. "We're saved!"

The camouflaged bowhunter sitting at the base of the tree looked at us like we were crazy. We were only a couple hundred yards from the road, he said. I doubt there were ever any three hunters so glad to see motor vehicles again.

We learned three lessons that day: New Jersey is a lot larger than common opinion; it's good practice to consult a map before going into an unknown hunting area; and swamps are great for harboring game and deterring hunters.

We met no other archers until we left the swamp's fringes, yet we had seen deer, a maze of game trails, rubs, beds and droppings. In places, the deer had made tunnels through the briars, kept open by constant use and browsing.

In southern New Jersey we learned to look at swamps as hot spots, hunting the edges or, where feasible, taking a stand within. Moving back to Pennsylvania, we added what we'd learned in the Pine Barrens to our store of upland hunting techniques, and have been glad ever since.

Pennsylvania has its own swamp lands, from isolated marshes to extensive boggy regions. These are never easy hunting, but they're well worth it.

When hunters think the bucks have gone over the next hill, they may, instead, have headed for the bottom. There deer have the protection of mud and mire to repel hunters, dense cover, and plenty of low food. Though deer can't see far in these

COVER PAINTING BY LINDA STEINER

WHILE SEPTEMBER'S PURSUITS used to be limited to dove hunting and preseason scouting, waterfowlers now have the chance to go after Canada geese early this month. The September resident Canada goose season runs from the first of the month to the 10th in some Northwest counties and to the 15th in some parts of the Southeast. Hunters are required to have a September Canada goose season permit in addition to a hunting license and a federal duck stamp. While migrant goose populations continue to decline, the number of geese spending the entire year in the state has boomed. This is the second year of the September Canada goose hunt, which is conducted by the Game Commission under U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service guidelines.

wet tangles, they can lie still, and with their keen ears and sense of smell, keep posted on what's approaching.

Most hunters prefer the long range view of open woods and dislike the close quarters of boggy thickets. A 30-yard shot is a long one in a swamp, 10 to 20 yards is more typical. It's certainly open sights or "slug gun" turf.

It's also suited to archery, if bowhunters can find a clear flight path for their arrow. In swamps, a stand must often be positioned so that the hunter has one high quality, short range shot to a trail, scrape or food source. There's rarely a 360-degree clear space around the archer.

In rifle hunting, swamps are a little easier. One farmer friend erected a tree stand in wet woods near his cornfield. Other hunters prowled the outside of the swamp, but few ventured in on the uncertain surface of sphagnum and mossy logs. The farmer knew a route that allowed him to get to his stand in the middle of the swamp without getting wet, and year after year he took a big buck.

It wasn't just the "drivers" that got him deer, but his high vantage point and his ability to "thread the needle" with a bullet through branches.

This past antlerless season, I took a doe on the edge of a Warren County swamp. It seems strange to say I was swamp hunting, when it was such a long climb up the steep hillside back to the car, but the creek hollow did fan into marshy depressions and a wide bottom under the hemlocks.

After the opening shots of the morning dwindled, I headed for the swamp. It was the natural place for deer to go. I turned my rifle scope down to its lowest power setting and sat where I could see 40 or 50 yards under the evergreens. The new snow was pockmarked with deer tracks. Getting a shot, I thought, should only be a matter of time.

I saw a mere handful of hunters all day, and wished for more to stir up the deer. About an hour before dark, I moved to the hillside slightly above the swamp, where deer had pawed the snow for acorns. With

most of the hunters out of the woods, perhaps some whitetails would feed.

I glimpsed several ghosting out of the bottom, going uphill, but I couldn't get a shot. A doe finally appeared nearer to me, and I filled my tag. I wasn't within the swamp, but it was close enough to call this a swamp success story.

Of course, swamps have some disadvantages, mostly because they're wet. Mosquitoes are a big problem until the first solid freeze of autumn. Head nets and insect repellent, and steady nerves, must serve early season archers.

Dry Ground Hot Spots

Swamps mean attention to footwear, something with a rubber bottom at least, or all the way up to hip boots and waders. The latter are used mainly to cross deep water to dry ground "hot spots" within the swamp. Although deer will go through the wet stuff if they have to, they use available islands as runways or bedding spots.

Swamps are easy to get lost in. The closeness of the trees and thickness of growth can give a feeling of claustrophobia, of being closed in or surrounded.

Limited vision makes it impossible to pick out distant landmarks and orient from them. Swamps deter the "straight line" compass path because they naturally have obstacles hunters need to go around.

Topo maps help, some, as does time spent in the swamp, especially in winter when it is frozen and bare. Beware, even then, for the soft spot in the ice. It's difficult to visit a swamp any time and not come back muddy.

Every swamp is different. There are the cold, dark, mountain bogs of the Poconos. Here, every black shadow and stump looks like a bear, and could be. In northwest Pennsylvania, the extensive swamps bordering rich farmland produce big bodied, heavy antlered deer, as well as ducks and geese.

Whether it's a one-acre wet spot in a woods patch, or a miles wide marsh, it's a magnet for wildlife, and should be for hunters as well.

An attitude not only of defense, but defiance.

— Thomas Gillespie
The Mountain Storm

THE LIGHT pierced the murky darkness like a laser as John swept a spotlight beam across the apple orchard, pausing whenever he saw deer.

John and Bob were looking for a 10-point buck they'd heard rumors about. They had been out for hours, and were beginning to doubt its existence, when suddenly John spotted it.

"Wow! Look at the size of that rack," he blurted.

Bob stared at the massive buck, his mouth agape. He had seen big deer before, but nothing like this. It dwarfed the others. Its broad antlers were immense, even for a deer of such size.

"I know where I'm hunting next week," Bob muttered.

"You mean where *we* are hunting," John said, watching the buck intently.

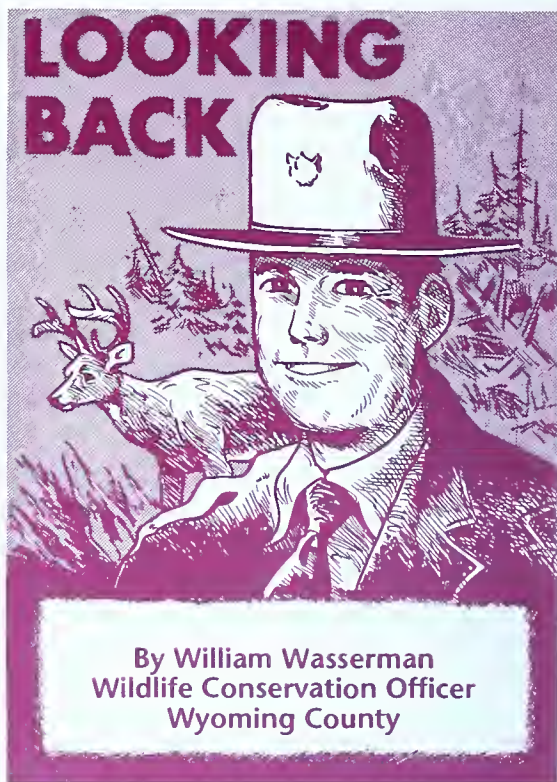
Bob said nothing, unable to pull his eyes from the magnificent animal.

Pennsylvania's archery season was about to open, and both young men were thrilled.

Suddenly headlights appeared behind them and a Blazer pulled close and stopped. On the bumper was a plate that bore the name "Gimpy" in silver letters. John recognized the name — it was Dudley McBungle's nickname. John could see through the windshield and saw Dudley was driving. Beside him sat Darrel Dropping. John had graduated Tunkhannock High School with them the year before.

Keeping his spotlight on the buck, John climbed halfway out the window of Bob's car and waved excitedly, pointing toward it. But his smile changed to a look of horror as Darrel pointed a rifle into the orchard.

The gun discharged in a deafening roar, its muzzle spewing a jagged yellow flame. The buck slumped then collapsed to its knees.



By William Wasserman
Wildlife Conservation Officer
Wyoming County

"Are you crazy?!" John screamed wildly. They stared in disbelief as the Blazer lurched forward and sped off.

"Get in!" Bob hollered. "We're going after them."

John dropped back into his seat and Bob punched the accelerator. Darkness made driving on the narrow dirt road difficult. Still, Bob was gaining on them until the road became so choked with dust that he had to back off. "Watch where they go when they hit the intersection," he yelled while applying his brakes.

The truck turned toward Lemon Township; Bob drove to his house and called the Game Commission.

As I listened to Bob's story my interest grew. It is unusual to hear from a witness who can identify suspects and is willing to testify in court. Bob and John were sickened by what had happened. They wanted me to come right out.

Deputy Marshall Stover and I met Bob and John at the orchard, and we began looking for the deer. Eventually a

blood trail was discovered. Marshall followed it into a swamp, but the dark, soggy wetland made tracking impossible. The trail was lost.

We wanted to interview the suspects that night. John and Bob knew where they lived and volunteered to take us there, so I drove to McBungle's house with John while Marshall and Bob went to see Dropping.

I eased my patrol car in front of McBungle's house and parked. Someone immediately came out and started walking over.

"That's him," John said. Not wanting to engage witness and suspect yet, I told John to stay in my car and I met McBungle halfway.

It was approaching midnight. The moon was full, and countless stars glittered like diamonds. The temperature was in the low 30s and my coat was zipped up, but McBungle wore only a T-shirt and jeans. "What's up?" he asked with feigned cordiality.

He was 19, about 5-9 and stocky, with short, sandy hair. Probably an athlete in school. He looked like a decent kid. But there was something about him that belied his friendly appearance. I could feel it.

"I'm with the Game Commission," I said. "I want to talk about the deer you and Darrel Dropping shot tonight."

"We didn't shoot a deer," McBungle said flatly.

"Oh, then you must not be Dudley McBungle," I retorted.

"Gimpy."

"Huh?"

"Call me Gimpy. I hate the name Dudley. I don't know anything about a deer."

"Okay, Gimpy," I said. "But I want you to meet someone who thinks differently. Step over to my car."

John had told me earlier he was willing to confront McBungle if necessary, and he lashed out at him.

"I saw you do it, Gimp. It was wrong and I'm not going to let this go. You



Question

Do farmers and other landowners need a federal duck stamp to hunt migratory waterfowl?

Answer

Yes. Under federal regulation, everyone 16 years of age and older must possess a Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp, commonly known as a federal "duck stamp," to hunt ducks and geese.

were driving and Darrel shot the deer. It's not right!"

Gimpy McBungle stared calmly into his accuser's eyes. "Wasn't me," he said coolly.

This was a first. Never before had I run into anyone quite like McBungle. "Wasn't me!" What kind of an answer is that? I thought. People just don't respond like that when confronted by an eyewitness. An innocent person would have said more. A guilty person, even when lying, will always shadow the truth: "I was there but I didn't do it; I saw someone else do it; I came later; I didn't mean it; an accident . . ." there were a thousand possible responses.

"Wasn't me" just didn't work, not when an eyewitness is pointing a stern finger of guilt right at you. Not when an officer is eyeing you with I-know-you-did-it written all over his weathered face. And most certainly, not when you're only 19 years old.

Looking toward his garage I asked, "Do you drive a Blazer?"

McBungle nodded, "Yeah."

"Mind if I take a look?"

McBungle walked to the garage and

opened the overhead door. The Blazer had been backed in. A license plate with "Gimpy" printed in silver letters was on the front bumper. I placed my hand on the hood — still warm — then searched the Blazer, hoping to find a gun or spent casing. Nothing.

"Your engine is warm," I said. "Been someplace recently?"

"Not in this," McBungle protested. "I haven't driven it since this afternoon. I was in Darrel Dropping's car tonight."

A lie, I was sure, but I couldn't prove it. There was no instrument at my disposal to measure engine heat, like a thermometer revealing the hours a corpse has lain.

"So what you're saying, then, is that John out there is lying. Right?"

"Yeah."

"Why would John lie about this?" I asked.

McBungle just shrugged.

"Are you guys enemies?"

"No."

"Then what?"

McBungle stuffed both hands in his pockets. He seemed indifferent to the situation. His eyes showed neither fear or concern.

I believed he and Darrel had made up a story, and McBungle was determined to stick with it.

Whenever I have a suspect willing to talk, I consider myself fortunate, even when I think everything he's saying is a lie. Although I prefer the truth (Plan A), lies can work, too (Plan B).

With Plan B, I listen to a suspect's story, diligently taking notes. If he is lying, I try to prove it and then confront him with his lies. If that fails to get his

attention, we go to court and I present my findings to the judge.

If a judge believes a defendant is lying, a guilty verdict is almost assured, providing the officer has evidence supporting his case. John and Bob, both eyewitnesses, were evidence. But I didn't have a dead deer or a gun. With two witnesses and two suspects, it was a stalemate. I needed more.

Switching to Plan B, I reached for my notebook and asked, "So where did you and Darrel go tonight?" (A notebook and pen in hand is compelling. It's as if the person you're interrogating feels obliged to speak because of your readiness to take notes.)

McBungle began what sounded like a rehearsed monologue. He said he and Darrel had been in Darrel's car, riding around for several hours, and that they'd stopped at a convenience store in Tunkhannock at 10 p.m. (the same time they were seen at the apple orchard). While at the store, they spoke with store employees and customers they knew.

Then McBungle added something that gave me a jolt. "Stumpy Carbuncle was with us," he said. "Ask him. He'll back us up."

Now it was three against two — their favor. I recalled Bob telling me that McBungle's Blazer was heading toward Lemon Township when they stopped chasing it.

Both Darrel and Dudley lived in Lemon Township. I figured they must have started their alibi shortly after shooting the deer, drove to Darrel's house to switch cars, then went to Tunkhannock to mingle with people.

Commission 800 Numbers

Within Pennsylvania, use the agency's toll-free 800 numbers to contact a wildlife conservation officer. For the Northwest Region, call (800) 533-6764; Southwest, (800) 243-8519; Northcentral, (800) 422-7551; Southcentral, (800) 422-7554; Northeast, (800) 228-0789; and Southeast (800) 228-0791. Phones will be manned around the clock during the major hunting seasons, and about 15 hours a day at other times.

They even found someone to corroborate their story — Stumpy Carbuncle.

Two witnesses for the commonwealth, they must have thought, merely meant they had to produce more “witnesses” for their side. Scary stuff, considering their young ages.

I met Deputy Stover after my interview with McBungle. He got the same story from Darrel.

The following afternoon I went to Tunkhannock and spoke with the employees at the convenience store. They remembered seeing McBungle and Dropping between 10 and 10:30 the night before. Shift change was at 11, so they were sure of the time.

I had no doubt that McBungle and Dropping shot the deer, but I now began to wonder if my two witnesses would be enough for a conviction in court.

Then, that night, I received a phone call from a young man I’ll call Chance.

“You were in the car with McBungle and Dropping?”

“Yes sir.”

“Was Stumpy Carbuncle with the three of you?”

“No. But we went to his house that night. Gimpy and Darrel asked him to say he was with them. He agreed. He’ll swear in court he was waiting in the car while they were in the convenience store. They want me to swear in court that I wasn’t with them, but I was, and they think you know it. But you don’t, do you?”

“Not until now. No one saw you?”

“I was in the back seat. I handed Darrel the gun. Guess I was scared not to. They were out to shoot a deer that night. I knew it. I shouldn’t have gone, but when they asked me . . .”

Chance paused for a moment and continued. “Honest, I’ve never done anything like this before. It’s just that, well, I wanted to be their friend.”

“I hope you’ve changed your mind by now,” I said.

“I guess so. I don’t know. We work together, it’s hard. I’ve been telling

them to just admit they did it, but they won’t listen.”

“Would you be willing to testify against them in court?”

“My older brother knows everything,” Chance sighed. “He says I have to. So I will.”

“Well, maybe you won’t,” I said.

“Once they know you’ve told me everything, they’ll probably stop playing games. Mind if I tell them about your call?”

“Go ahead. I’m not going to lie for them and I don’t want to go to court. Maybe they’ll listen.”

But McBungle and Dropping wouldn’t listen, even when I told them they were flirting with a felony charge of intimidating a witness (asking Chance to give false testimony). And although they now realized three witnesses were willing to testify against them, McBungle and Dropping refused to admit anything.

It would’ve been a simple matter at this point to file charges and let things fall into place. But I didn’t want to bring three civilian witnesses into a lengthy court case if I could avoid it.

Both Darrel and Dudley lived at home with their parents. I decided to play my last card. I telephoned Darrel’s mother. She listened intently as I explained everything.

When I finished, she didn’t offer any excuses or arguments on her son’s behalf. I felt relieved. She said she’d talk to her son when he returned home from work. She’d have him call me.

That night, Darrel and Dudley confessed on the telephone. Their fines were more than \$1,000 each, and both pleaded guilty before a district justice the following week.

McBungle and Dropping were willing to interfere with enforcement officers, witnesses, friends and the judicial system to avoid prosecution. But they wouldn’t mess with Mom. I suppose, in light of that, there is hope for them after all.

Saving all the Pieces

TAMBOPATA WILDLIFE RESERVE, PERU, MAY 1985 — My husband, Bruce, and I are spending three days on this 13,000-acre tract of virgin rain forest, which scientists have recently discovered has the richest fauna of any single area in the world — at least 566 bird species, 145 species of dragonflies and 1,209 species of butterflies.

It also has healthy populations of rare and endangered species — giant otters, harpy eagles, ocelots, pumas, jaguars and black caimans.

The second day of our stay we are out by 7 a.m., hiking to Laguna Cocococha, a large oxbow lake three miles from our accommodations at Explorer's Inn. From a canoe we easily spot a troop of white-fronted capuchin monkeys ranging through the canopy. Loud calls alert us to 50 blue and yellow macaws flying overhead. Butterflies of exotic hues land on our heads, our hands, and even our binoculars.

Suddenly, ahead of us in the water, we spot first one dark head, followed by a second, third and fourth, swimming rapidly toward a backwater eddy. For maybe two minutes we have the privilege of watching one of the rarest mammals in the world — the giant otter — and then they are gone.

GUANACASTE NATIONAL PARK, COSTA RICA, FEBRUARY 1989 — This time we are exploring an even rarer ecosystem, a dry tropical

forest, following a remote trail beside a stream. As we walk we are accompanied by the screams of a nearby mountain lion. Finally my husband sets up his camera in the middle of the trail and we wait. But instead of a mountain lion, the largest land mammal in Central America comes trotting into view, heading purposefully toward the stream.

"Get a picture," I whisper to Bruce. He aims the camera into the woods and shoots.

Later, we are disappointed at the fuzzy slide of a Baird's tapir.

It looked so much larger in real life. But of all the animals we see that day — collared peccaries, white-tailed deer, coaties — the Baird's tapir is the prize. We have "bagged" another endangered species for our memory bank.

BRUSH MOUNTAIN, CENTRAL PENNSYLVANIA, OCTOBER 1989 — As I descend First Field through the locust grove, I hear a high-pitched "cree-cree-cree-cree." An osprey circles above me, a fish clasped in its talons. After making several passes over the field, the raptor flies to a tree branch on Sapsucker Ridge where it stands and looks around silently while I sit in a locust grove and watch it through my binoculars.

I spend half an hour keeping it company, but then finally break the spell by trying to see how close I can get to it before it flies. As I walk near, the osprey begins calling again. Finally it flies above me, still clutching the same fish.



The Naturalist's Eye

Then it is off over Laurel Ridge. I have had my first ever view of an osprey on our mountain-top.

UTAH, U.S.A., JUNE 1990 — We are in Salt Lake City, attending the Outdoor Writers Association of America's annual conference, and I have signed up for two wildlife tours sponsored by the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources.

The first tour takes place at the Joshua Tree Scenic Area in southwestern Utah's Mojave Desert. Accompanied by biologist Mike Coffeen, we spend eight hours hiking in search of endangered desert tortoises.

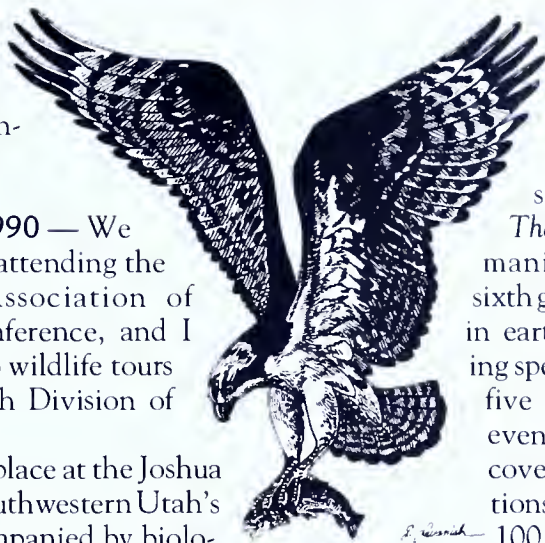
We find several within an exclosure — an area that cattle, sheep and other grazers are kept out of. Such an exclosure allows the wild grasses that sustain desert tortoises to thrive.

Coffeen is particularly excited when we encounter a female tortoise newly emerged from hibernation. She has grown rapidly since her previous capture. Then, as if to prove the importance of wild grasses to her well-being, she trots over to the nearest bush muhley grass clump and begins to eat, undisturbed by clicking cameras and admiring glances.

The second tour is billed as a one-day trip to a black bear research project 60 miles south of Salt Lake City and a stop at the Provo River to observe the annual spawning run of the endangered June sucker. We drive through some ruggedly beautiful country, but there are no black bears to be seen — biologists tell us that much of the area is due to be dammed. On the way back we bypass the Provo River.

"We couldn't find any June suckers this year," they explain. "Looks like they're gone." Extinction, for the June suckers, is forever, probably because the Provo River has been altered by human use.

This is the first time our hobby of "collecting" endangered species has been unsuccessful. But if we continue to lose spe-



cies at the present rate, it will not be the last. According to Harvard biologist Edward O. Wilson, in his latest book *The Diversity of Life*, humanity has started the sixth great extinction spasm in earth's history, destroying species at a rate the first five extinctions did not even begin to equal. Recovery from those extinctions took between 10 and 100 million years.

It is anyone's guess how long it will take the earth to recover from this latest great extinction if it is allowed to continue.

Wilson hopes, by writing a book that points out the importance of maintaining our planet's biological diversity, we may be galvanized to do something before it is too late. He believes in "saving them all," because time and again it has been the "humble and ignored" species that have been most valuable to humanity. The Pacific yew is a good example.

Once considered a "trash" tree by loggers in the Pacific Northwest, it had been crushed beneath "commercially valuable" trees such as Douglas fir as old growth forests were cut. Then researchers discovered that the bark and needles of Pacific yew contain the powerful anti-cancer compound taxol.

Now the race is on to develop that compound synthetically — not, it turns out, an easy task. In the meantime, thousands of women who might otherwise be saved die each year of ovarian cancer. To them, Pacific yew is far more valuable than Douglas fir.

In fact, 41 percent of our drugs are derived from nature — 25 percent from plants, 13 percent from microorganisms and 3 percent from animals.

Ironically, the large and beautiful mammals and birds we try to save, such as elephants and whooping cranes, are prob-

ably less important to us than despised species such as leeches whose saliva contains hirudin, an anticoagulant that is used to dissolve blood clots, or vampire bats whose saliva opens clogged arteries twice as fast as standard drugs, or Malayan pit vipers whose venom contains another anticoagulant called kistrin.

But by protecting the more charismatic animals, which typically need large, intact areas to survive, we inadvertently protect the "insignificant" plants and animals that also inhabit such places.

Another major advantage to humans in saving earth's biodiversity is the possibility of developing 30,000 edible plant species to feed the world's burgeoning population. Right now 20 food species provide 90 percent of the world's food and three of those 20 — wheat, corn and rice — supply more than half.

Yet there are many, such as the winged bean, a nitrogen-fixing legume of the tropics, that hold enormous food potential. Other plants may be able to supply non-polluting forms of energy. Still others may help to strengthen the disease resistance of our common foods.

For instance, in the 1970s a Mexican college student discovered the maize species *Zea diploperennis*, a wild relative of corn which is resistant to diseases and possesses perennial growth genes. Those genes, if transferred into domestic corn, could boost world domestic corn production by billions of dollars.

Yet *Zea diploperennis* occupied just 25 acres of mountain land in the west central

state of Jalisco, Mexico, and was due to be chopped down and burned within the week.

Such near misses send scientists into a frenzy. What, they ask, have we already lost? At the conservative estimate of 4,000 to 6,000 species worldwide a year, the possibilities are mind-numbing. And because of the incredible number of species per acre in the rain forests, those areas will have larger numbers of useful species.

But all the cures and new foods are not found in the rain forest. Although it is imperative to save as much intact rain forest as possible, we must be equally vigilant right here in Pennsylvania.

As Wilson says in a recent interview, "We must agree that if we can't preserve our own natural environment and species, we are in poor condition to advise the rest of the world." In many of the countries whose rain forests we are trying to save, the people live on the edge of starvation. We do not.

Yet we seem unwilling to change our own ways of doing business to save, say, wetlands that harbor a disproportionate number of our endangered species. Committing money to the cause is even harder.

Jerry Hassinger, endangered species coordinator for the Game Commission, says: "We are not within 25 percent of knowing how many species we have in Pennsylvania, although the numbers lie somewhere between 15,000 and 20,000. And we don't have the trained naturalists to do the work or the money to pay them."

What are the chances that we have species here in Pennsylvania that might be useful? Back in 1984 a pharmaceutical company developed from the common may apple a derivative that is being used successfully in treating testicular cancer after chemotherapy has failed. It also seems to fight such viruses as herpes I, herpes II, influenza A and measles.

As for food possibilities, I don't need to remind *Game News* readers about the culinary importance of wild game and fish. Yet during the good old days of unregulated hunting and fishing, it looked as if even some of our most valuable wild foods would



go extinct. My mother-in-law, who was raised on an apple farm at the base of North Mountain in Luzerne County, tells me that when she was growing up seeing a white-tailed deer on their rural property was a major event. And my father, who roamed the woods of Pennsylvania as a boy, never saw a wild turkey.

Today, seeing either is no big deal because a majority of Pennsylvanians, who wanted their grandchildren to have the same hunting and fishing privileges as they did (and the same culinary delights), mustered the political will to defeat the minority who wanted to plunder those natural resources for their own benefit without considering future generations.

We proved the enforcement of game laws, coupled with single-species management, could bring back endangered species — provided the habitat was reasonably intact. Today, to manage for “saving

all the pieces” as Hassinger defines biodiversity, we need a similar commitment to saving habitat. The loss of habitat to urban and suburban sprawl and highways here in Pennsylvania, as well as clearcut logging, cattle-ranching and unregulated mining in tropical countries, is propelling us into the sixth extinction.

But despite all the logical arguments for saving biodiversity, my gut reason for wanting a diverse natural world is because such diversity makes life worth living. Nothing can compare to the thrill of seeing an osprey fly over our mountaintop or finding an endangered bog turtle in a Lancaster County wetland or meeting an Allegheny woodrat face to face in a dry cave high on a Bedford County mountaintop.

“Man,” biologist Larry Harris says, “is hellbent on homogenizing the Earth.” How dull life will be for our grandchildren and great grandchildren if we succeed.

Fun Games

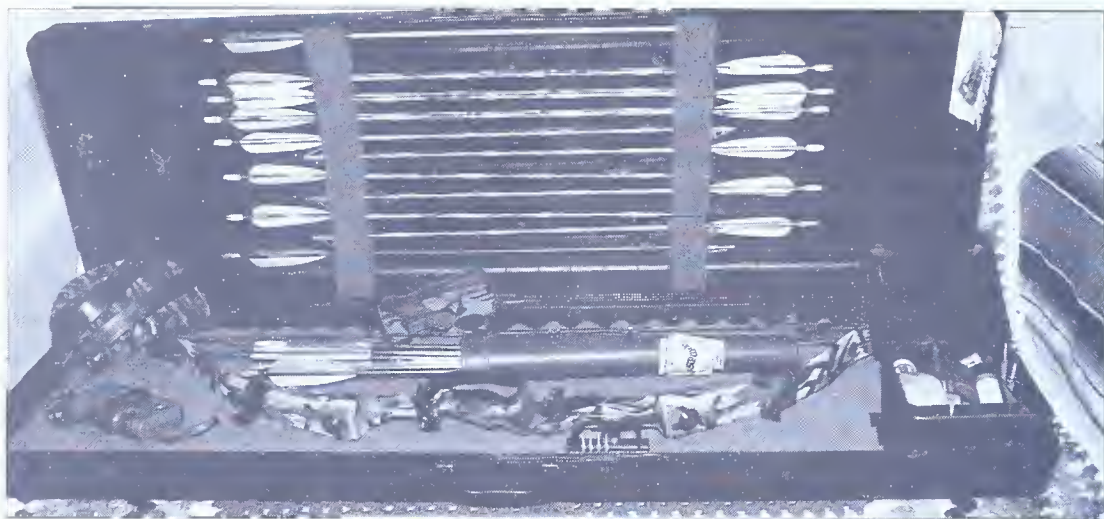
What’s Up, Doc?

By Connie Mertz

Listed below are facts pertaining to either the cottontail rabbit or snowshoe hare. Place a “C” beside those that pertain to the cottontail and an “H” beside those that are true about snowshoes.

- ___ 1. Hunted only in winter.
- ___ 2. Is Pennsylvania’s No. 1 small game animal.
- ___ 3. Born with fur.
- ___ 4. Only two can be harvested daily.
- ___ 5. A farmland species.
- ___ 6. A forest species.
- ___ 7. Populations limited to northern Pennsylvania.
- ___ 8. Will seek a hole or burrow for protection.
- ___ 9. Can jump in 10-foot bounds.
- ___ 10. Born in fur-lined nest.
- ___ 11. Doesn’t change colors, but sheds from brown to white.
- ___ 12. Leaves powder-puff tracks in snow.

answers on p. 64



MODERN BOW CASES are designed to store safely a strung compound and all the accoutrements that today's bowhunter is likely to take to the local archery range or that hunt of a lifetime.

Equipment Care

By Keith C. Schuyler

"LEMMIE TRY THAT."

So saying, 250 pounds of muscle and blubber grabs a bow without asking and whips the bowstring across his chest. His face reddens as he struggles to pull it past peak weight, then the pressure suddenly eases.

"Don't . . . !" you start to shout. Too late. "... let go."

"Hey. How about that?" the muscleman exudes. "On my first try!"

You carefully examine the \$350 bow's limbs for traces of cracks. Fortunately, none is evident. But you know the bow may someday break from hidden damage that surely occurred.

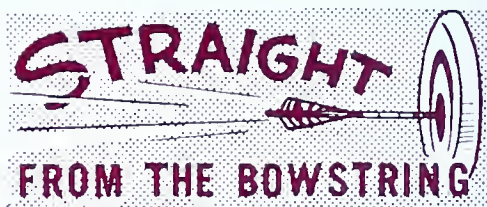
In archery, as in just about every other sport, there are rules or guidelines to help you take care of the equipment. Many of today's bows are expensive, and economy demands the wise shooter take care of them. Expense aside, shoddy maintenance makes the bow less dependable and less safe.

The first rule in bow handling is never, ever release a fully drawn string without an arrow on the rest.

Immediate evidence may be a sickening crack as one of the limbs shatters, possibly injuring the archer or an onlooker. Or a limb may break later, perhaps when the shooter is in the middle of a tournament or drawing on an animal, again presenting possible danger to spectators or the bowman.

Fortunately, bow breakage is rare. But because it can and does happen, it is one more reason why you should never shoot when anybody is close by or at all forward of the shooting line.

Today's bows are generally well-built



and will withstand any reasonable treatment for thousands of shots.

However, there are dangers if shooters ignore makers' warnings or mishandle the bows. Then, too, although extremely rare, there are manufacturing defects to consider. Then there are plain mishaps in storage or carrying that can cause embarrassment at least or perhaps even serious injury.

Only once has a bow broken in my hand. It was a nice little compound that had served me well and deserved a couple notches on the grip. But it simply wore out. Suffice to say, it was so old I wasn't able to get a replacement limb.

On another occasion, a bow didn't break but it had every right to. It happened on a hunt in Colorado. I was wearing sneakers and attempted to step down from an old weapons carrier that was used to transport hunters through the bush. My foot slipped from a large tow bar, and my recurve bow slammed into something as I crashed to the ground.

After gathering myself, I retrieved my bow and found that it and the string had parted company. There was no serious damage to me or the bow and string, but I was lucky. That was about 20 years ago, and the bow is still among my favorites.

Back when longbows were the most popular style of bow around, breakage was fairly common. Fortunate was the bowman who had a good yew bow or — the next best — osage orange or lemonwood. Many other woods made acceptable bows, but their useful life was limited.



Despite waxes and varnish, weather extremes raised havoc with most wooden bows back then. Hickory, for example, was apt to crack on cold mornings, and even the vaunted osage orange and lemonwood bows will take a set if they're subjected to high temperatures or left strung for a long time.

It has often been said a bow — compounds excepted — is nine-tenths broken when it is at full draw. Furthermore, improper stringing of longbows and recurves can cause damage even before the bow is ever drawn. You can avoid this problem — and the inevitable wrestling match that usually occurs when stringing them — by using a bow stringer.

The Old Way

The old way to string a longbow is to hold the lower tip of the bow under one foot, and then with the grip firmly in one hand simultaneously applying pressure against the upper limb to slide the string loop onto the bow nock.

If the string is not properly nocked on the lower limb, or the upper limb slips from his grasp, the bow may slam back into the archer's face or head.

I've heard of at least one archer losing an eye in this manner. Needless to say, abrasion resulting from placing the lower bow tip on the floor or ground doesn't do it any favors.

Some still string a recurve bow by laying the strung, lower limb over the instep of one foot. Then holding the upper limb while the hips or upper leg applies pressure to the riser section; when the bow is sufficiently flexed, fingers slide the string loop onto the upper bow nock. Unless this maneuver is done with near perfection, the lower limb of a recurve can be

WHEN TRAVELING by commercial carrier, it's a good idea to flag your baggage with plastic tubing or some other bright, conspicuous material that will enable you to easily locate and retrieve your luggage.

easily damaged because of the unnatural twisting.

One dealer I know supplied a bow stringer with every recurve bow he sold, along with the admonishment that he would not replace any bow that was strung without use of a bow stringer.

Compounds don't require the care and precautions that characterize the more primitive recurves and longbows.

Advice from PSE

To make sure that I didn't miss anything, I contacted PSE (Precision Shooting Equipment) about cautions and care of the compound and its components, and archery engineer Robert Ragsdale answered all my questions. While his answers naturally reflect experience with his company's products, his reputation is good enough for me, and I'm sure what he offers here applies to all compounds in general.

Because there is considerable pressure on the string of a strung bow, care around sharp objects takes on some importance. Ragsdale says this pressure ranges from 80 to 180 limb pounds, depending upon wheel design and peak weight. So if the string is accidentally cut, there will be an explosion of sorts.

Ragsdale says it's not necessary to unstring a compound if it's not to be used for some time. He also says extreme humidity, heat or cold have negligible effects on shooting qualities or longevity of the basic bow. Other than keeping the bow in a safe place to prevent damage to string or accessories, Ragsdale said the archer needn't worry much about storage.

Ragsdale doesn't recommend waxing or polishing to preserve finish. He does suggest beeswax combinations on strings to "hold down fuzz effect."

BE SURE to check all your equipment regularly. Deterioration of foam material, for example, moisture buildup and a host of other problems can easily go undetected during long periods of storage.

Lubricating wheels and cams is rarely needed, and is not required at all on models with the Oilite bronze bushings many bows use.

Ragsdale urges shooters to check arrows for cracked nocks and to be certain the arrow is on the string before release. He also suggests that strings and cables be changed twice a year for heavy users, once a year for normal shooting. "This prevents injury and limb and eccentric (wheel) damage," he says.

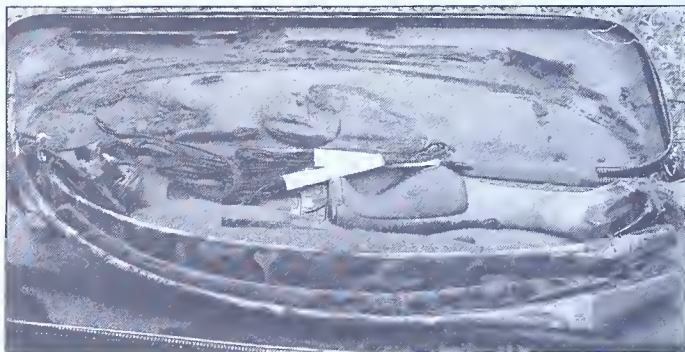
Ragsdale's comments were endorsed by Pete Shepley, president of PSE.

As to bow finish, in the early days if you wanted your bow camouflaged you did it yourself. Some still do, and some fastidious archers use cloth camo bow covers and sacrifice a few feet per second in arrow speed.

Archers who shoot the same bow for target shooting and hunting sometimes apply common masking tape to their bows and then paint it. The tape can be removed after the season, as can commercially available camouflage bow tape. But remember, all adhesives *can* damage bow laminations when removed. Use of them voids the guarantee by some companies. Fortunately, modern bows are camouflaged at the factory.

Most of the preceding bow care recommendations apply to recurves and longbows, too — often for different reasons.

For instance, it's especially important to guard against a cut to the string of the longbow or recurve. Both designs are relatively straight when unstrung, and stringing them makes each limb a veritable spring. If the string breaks or is cut, both limbs will



lash out with considerable force. Such an event can injure a person, property or the bow itself.

Much bow damage or hazards can be prevented by keeping your bow in a case. Bows should be cased when they're being transported — either by car or by plane — and some of the more elaborate cases are designed to hold enough accessories and supplies for even an extended journey.

When traveling, a simple tip I picked up from the late Harry Allaman can minimize your bow being picked up by mistake or having somebody casually open the case. Tie a piece of colored plastic tubing around the case handle, making it readily identifiable when your case rides the air terminal luggage carousel or is all but buried in a pile of baggage at a bus station.

Unlike compounds, recurves and longbows should be unstrung if they're to be stored for any considerable period. They should then be stored on a flat surface or on a horizontal rack, belly up. Racks should be lined with material such as felt to prevent damage to bow finishes.

If you store your bow in a case with egg carton foam cushioning, check it regularly. Not long ago I inspected my arsenal and found that the cushioning in two bow cases had deteriorated so badly it had to be replaced.

Temperature Changes

When I'm getting ready to go hunting or when I'm on a hunting trip, I like to keep my bow outside to avoid rapid temperature changes that result in bringing a bow out of a warm house on a cold morning. I also flex the bow to full draw a number of times before hitting the hills. Conversely, bringing a cold bow into a warm building at the end of the day can result in condensation on the metal parts of a compound.

One final note. If you get caught in the rain, it'd be good idea to wipe down your bow and broadheads, and if you use actual feathers for fletching you can spray Dri-Fab, an Amway product, or any of the several anti-moisture agents on the market on them beforehand. If they get really wet,

HOW DO YOU MEASURE UP?

THE NATIONAL Shooting Sports Foundation reports that 2.5 million people are participating in target archery. This can range from simple backyard shooting into hay bales to grueling matches at the highest level of competition. Equipment ranges from the old, traditional longbow to the sophisticated compounds.

And looking at Pennsylvania archery license sales, which have climbed from 250,000 to nearly 300,000 in just the past five years, it's evident archery has become a popular form of hunting, too.

Not long ago, to get an idea of what an average ability among today's bowmen might be, the NSSF compiled scores of a group of what was considered "average bowhunters."

Archers shot five arrows at 10 yards and five at 20, at targets 40 centimeters in diameter, with five concentric scoring rings ranging in value from one to five points — with five points being awarded for the center ring. Out of a possible 50 points, the average score was 36.

For more about competitive archery, contact the National Archery Association, 1750 East Boulder St., Colorado Springs, CO 80909, or the National Field Archery Association, 31407 Outer I-10, Redlands, CA 92373.

hold them judiciously over steam — like dry flies — and they will come back to shape.

Proper equipment care is as essential in archery as it is in all other hunting, and it is the archer's responsibility to ensure his gear is in good working order. Bowhunters owe it to themselves and their quarry to make sure their bows are in good condition. The target shooter also must consider the safety of his fellow competitors and spectators.



J.S. Rupp

SCOPES ARE CERTAINLY the preferred sighting device for most rimfire and centerfire shooters these days. But it wasn't always so, and many people today still find a good open sight to be just the ticket in the hunting fields and on the target range.

How to Use Iron Sights

By Don Lewis

THE LATE Warren Page, veteran gun writer and expert rifleman, watched as Tom Leete aimed a Winchester Model 64 lever action .219 Zipper at a chuck's head more than 175 yards away. Leete was in a sitting position and using a forked stick rest, but that's about all he had in his favor. The Model 64 was equipped with a Winchester 98A peep sight and a flat top front sight.

When the Zipper cracked, the chuck disappeared. It looked like a miss, but the 50-grain Speer bullet had found its mark. When Leete extracted the dead chuck from the hole, Page remarked that it was incredible shooting with iron sights.

Over the many years that Helen and I have hunted woodchucks with Tom Leete, I've seen him make even longer shots, many from the offhand position. Tom will use a scope, but for shots under 200 yards he still prefers the challenge offered by iron sights.

Since Tom has pursued iron sight shooting and design technology with increasing



interest for nearly three decades, I was anxious to share his thoughts and opinions with readers of this column.

First and foremost, Tom dismisses the belief that aging eyes are for scopes only. Tom says the most common complaint he hears from shooters is that they can't see well enough to shoot irons. Tom is 71 years old and wears strong bifocals, but he says iron sights are not a problem for him.

He believes most shooters simply don't understand what good iron sights should be and what a good sight picture should look like when using them.

Perhaps a brief explanation of iron sights is in order here. Alternately called metallic sights, they are non-magnifying and usually constructed of metal. There are two types: open and aperture, also called a peep sight.

The open rear sight is commonly affixed to the barrel just forward of the receiver and the front sight is placed just shy of the muzzle. The rear sight is usually a metal leaf with a U- or V-shape notch, but it can also be flat or nearly so — a gentle sloping from either side to the center.

Some rear sights are adjusted by means of a stepped metal bar. The sight is lifted and the shooter slides the bar to the desired step (height). This is much like the rear sights on modern big game rifles, at least those that still have them, in which the rear sights are typically mounted on a ramp; elevation is changed by sliding the sight up or down the ramp.

The other style of rear sight is the aperture or peep sight, and this is preferred by many who shoot metallic sights. The sight attaches to the receiver and in most cases has built-in windage and elevation adjustments that work similar to adjustments on a scope.

With both designs, the front sight is typically a metal post that, on modern rifles at least, has a metal bead on top — usually colored gold, ivory or red. It is either fitted into a milled slot or placed on a ramp. The front sight is sometimes adjustable for windage by drifting with a brass tap hammer.

Leete notes that few factory guns today



THE SIGHT PICTURE from a factory open sight, as illustrated by Darrel Lewis above, makes it difficult to judge the horizontal plane, which affects level of impact. Leete prefers a flat-topped front sight for shooting a six o'clock hold, which he maintains is the best way to shoot irons.



come equipped with good iron sights. For years most front sights on American sporting rifles have been tipped with dull, gold colored beads. These are difficult to see against a background of dead leaves or — even more importantly — brown deer hair, and they don't define the horizontal plane very well. Furthermore, they are extremely difficult to see in dim light.

"The small 'V' or 'U' notch rear sight coupled with a gold bead front sight is



VAN DYKE'S plain bar and blade is a very basic yet effective open sight design. He and other shooters from the turn of the century believed that a flat-topped design was best for making elevation adjustments in their holds when shooting at longer ranges, right.

about the poorest sight combination available," Leete says.

But Leete does have some advice for those who, by choice or necessity, end up shooting that combination. He recommends that it be used much like half of a peep sight.

The front bead should be level with the top of the rear sight, not pulled down into the notch. He also prefers a six o'clock hold, one in which the target sits atop the front sight and is not covered in any way by the bead.

Looking Back

Leete looks back into history for some guidelines as to what constitutes an iron sight setup that's worth shooting. T.S. Van Dyke, author of *The Still Hunter*, and A.C. Gould, who wrote *Modern American Rifle*, described their preferences in a front sight. They said it should be flat topped and tipped with ivory, which doesn't glare and shows clearly in dim light.

"The rear sight should be a top quality receiver (peep) sight with micrometer clicks, fitted with an aperture disc with a 1/8-inch hole and a 3/8-inch outside diameter."

Leete, too, prefers an aperture sight. When hunting under the low light condi-

tions normally found in the woods, the aperture disc can be removed to allow use of the 3/8-inch threaded hole. In bright open fields, the smaller aperture cuts down glare.

Aperture rear sights are available from Williams Gun Sight Co. and Lyman Products Corp. Lyman (Route 147, Middlefield, CT 06455) offers two styles: the Model 57 for rounded receivers and the Model 66 for flat ones. Both go for \$65 apiece and are designed to fit many popular centerfires and rimfires. For under \$20, Lyman also sells folding open rear sights, screw-on ramps for front sights, bases and a number of hunting front sights (gold or ivory colored beads).

Williams (7389 Lapeer Rd., P.O. Box 329, Davison, MI 48423) has an extensive list of iron sights and accessories. It offers two lines of peep sights designed to fit a wide variety of popular arms. Its FP series aperture sights sell for between \$50 and \$65; the 5D series goes for about \$30. The company also lists low profile receiver sights, screw-in apertures, open rear sights (four configurations: square, U and V notches, and a "Britisher" flat blade), ramps, riser blocks and front sights.

But that's not to say the aperture sight is the only way to go. Leete also likes a rear

sight with a 1/4-inch half-round notch. While holding the top of the front blade even with the top of the rear sight, he gets a semi-peep sight picture that is literally free of glare.

Van Dyke went so far as to recommend a straight bar of hard leather. It was flat on top — no notch or V. The eye automatically finds the center much the same as it finds the center of the aperture in peep sights. And the bar of leather eliminated glare.

Old-timers also preferred a broad, nearly flat-topped rear sight for dangerous game hunting. It sloped gently from both ends toward the center. Leete has tried that type of iron sight on deer and found it to be effective.

The preference early gun writers like Van Dyke showed for a flat-topped front sight stemmed from the belief that most hunters tended to miss either over or under their targets. The flat front sight makes it easier to judge elevation.

“Wind will move a bullet away from the vertical plane, but not estimating the distance correctly affects the horizontal (or level of impact) plane. To do this effectively, the front sight should be flat on top, having a width as broad as the head on a common pin.”

Williams offers a flat top Patridge sight with a gold insert. Millett (16131 Gothard St., Huntington Beach, CA 92647) offers a flat-topped front sight in either white or orange.

“I don’t want to sound like I’m contradicting myself, but either ivory or white does not lend itself to target work. Best results will come from darkening or shading the front sight with a sight blackening spray,” Leete says.

It’s wise to have a competent gunsmith install open sights because he will use a front sight of the correct height. Drilling and tapping a barrel and action for open sights and knowing what height front sight to use requires a good bit of skill and precision equipment.

Regardless of what iron sight system a hunter has chosen, it’s not much good if he

doesn’t know what to do with it. Leete uses woodchuck hunting to illustrate what he calls an “inverted T” sight picture.

A .10-inch wide blade front sight, placed 30 inches from the shooter’s eye, covers about 12 inches at 100 yards. This is nearly twice the width of a standing woodchuck, but here is where the flat top comes into its own, Leete says. The top of the front sight represents the crossbar of the T; the woodchuck’s body is the stem of the T. With the sight aligned vertically on the chuck, the square corners make it easy to tell how high or low you’re holding. With a round bead, there’s less of a reference point.

“This might be somewhat of a paradox, but the sight actually gets better as the distance increases,” Leete says.

Different for Deer

Deer present a different situation. Leete prefers a narrower front sight, something around .060 to .080 inch. He also changes his sight picture to a six o’clock hold — placing the front sight at the bottom of the deer’s rib cage. This hold prevents any of the deer’s body from being obscured by the front sight.

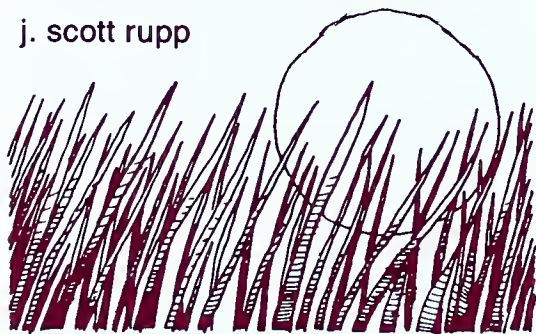
Because a deer measures approximately 16 to 18 inches high through the chest, the gun must shoot eight to nine inches high to place a bullet in the center of the deer’s chest when using a six o’clock hold. This can be accomplished on the range with bullseye targets.

Sighting at ranges at which you expect to take deer (50 or 100 yards, for example), hold at six o’clock — the bottom of the bullseye on top of the front sight — and adjust the rear sight until the rounds are striking eight to nine inches above your point of aim.

While today’s hunters certainly are better served by scopes, some riflemen are turning to iron sights — either out of nostalgia or just for the added challenge they provide. Armed with knowledge and considerable practice, the iron sight shooter can be just as deadly as his scope-shooting counterpart.

In the wind

j. scott rupp



Horses on the barrier islands that line some parts of the Atlantic Coast are coming under increasing scrutiny. Recent media reports say the National Park Service is conducting a three-year study to develop horse management plans in the Southeast. According to some researchers, the horses cause significant destruction to their island ecosystems. "If a developer damaged these islands the way horses do, he would be put in jail," one scientist said.

The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, in an attempt to discourage long-range shooting at waterfowl and reduce crippling loss, is looking at limiting the size of shotgun shells to 3½ inches (the largest currently marketed) and to restrict shot size to no larger than No. T. The service also wants shotshell makers to get approval for coatings on nontoxic shot pellets. Public comment must be received by Sept. 28.

Louisiana-Pacific Corp. was recently fined \$11.1 million for violating clean air laws. It was the largest civil fine ever levied under the Clean Air Act. The firm was also ordered to install \$70 million in pollution controls, which should reduce by 95 percent the pollution emitted during the manufacture of its wood paneling products. The company exceeded federal air standards at 14 facilities in 11 states.

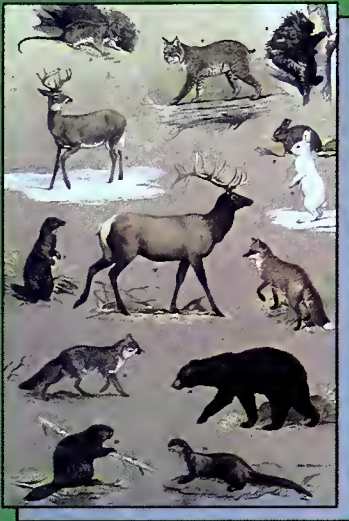
Sugar cane growers who have polluted the Everglades may pay at least half the cost of a \$465 million restoration project. The Dept. of Interior hammered out a tentative agreement with the growers to begin what could be a 20-year Everglades cleanup. The project might include a drainage system to restore natural water flows and filtration marshes to catch phosphorus run-off from sugar cane and vegetable fields.

The annual Kirtland's warbler count in Michigan this year yielded 475 singing males, up 20 percent from last year. Assuming one nesting female per singing male, the pre-nesting population was 950. According to the North Woods Call, as recently as 1989 there were only 212 mature Kirtland's males in the world. The species nests only in the state's jackpine stands.

Polar bears on some Arctic islands may be bearing fewer young because industrial toxins from North America and Europe are poisoning seal blubber. The National Wildlife Federation says a study documented levels of polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) in bears on a Norwegian Arctic archipelago that were five to 10 times higher than those found in animals in Canada or Alaska. Eleven or 12 of 14 bears tracked in Norway were expected to have cubs — only five did.

While recycling recovered 17 percent of U.S. municipal solid waste generated in 1990, compared to 13 percent in '88, the EPA reports Americans are throwing away more trash than ever. The per capita weight of trash jumped from 4.0 to 4.3 pounds per person per day over the same period. By 2000 the figure could be 4.5, which translates to 220 million tons each year.

Answers: 1 - H, 2 - C, 3 - H, 4 - H, 5 - C, 6 - H, 7 - H, 8 - C, 9 - H, 10 - C, 11 - H, 12 - H



mammals of the mountain
(from Set No. 2)

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The Game Commission's ever popular bird and mammal charts are perfect for homes, classrooms, camps — just about anywhere. Created by internationally renown wildlife artist Ned Smith, these charts feature the state's most common mammal and bird species — 179 in all.

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Set No. 1 features winter birds, marsh and water birds, waterfowl, and birds of prey. **PRICE: \$6**

Set No. 2 depicts mammals of farm and woodlot, mammals of the mountain, birds of the forest, and birds of field and garden. **PRICE: \$6**

Set No. 3 includes all eight charts, each 11"x14" in size. **PRICE: \$5**

The charts are sold only in sets, not individually. Prices include sales tax and delivery.



birds of prey
(from Set No. 1)

Send check or money order (no cash, please) payable to Pennsylvania Game Commission, Dept. MS, 2001 Elmerton Ave., Harrisburg, PA 17110-9797. Be sure to ask for a complete list of the agency's sale items and free publications.

Working Together for Wildlife



- ◆ "Bear Run" by Bob Sopchick is the 11th limited edition fine art print for the Working Together for Wildlife program.

As with previous editions, "Bear Run" is limited to 600 signed and numbered prints on acid-free, 100 percent rag paper. Image size is about 15x22½ inches. The prints are \$125, delivered; framed prints cost \$97.50 more.

- ◆ Proceeds from WTFW sales benefit Pennsylvania's nongame management and research projects. So far, the program has raised more than \$1 million and has helped bring eagles, ospreys, otters and other species back to our landscape.

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PENNSYLVANIA GAME NEWS

OCTOBER 1993

ONE DOLLAR



Working Together for Wildlife



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PENNSYLVANIA GAME NEWS (ISSN 0031-451X) is published monthly for \$9 per year, \$25.50 for three years (Pennsylvania residents add 6% sales tax), or membership in Pennsylvania's Cooperative Farm-Game Project or Safety Zone Project; to Canada and all other foreign countries, \$10 U.S. currency, per year. Published by the Pennsylvania Game Commission, Harrisburg, PA. Phone (717) 787-4250. Second-class postage paid at Harrisburg, Pa. CHANGE OF ADDRESS: POSTMASTER: Send both old and new addresses to Pennsylvania Game News, 2001 Elmerton Ave., Harrisburg, PA 17110-9797. Allow six weeks for processing. Material accepted is subject to our requirements for editing and revising. Author payment covers all rights and title to accepted material, including manuscripts, photographs, drawings and illustrations. No information contained in this magazine may be used for advertising or commercial purposes. Opinions expressed here do not necessarily reflect those of the Pennsylvania Game Commission. Copyright © 1993 by the Pennsylvania Game Commission, an Equal Opportunity Employer, the programs of which are all administered consistent with the goals and objectives of Affirmative Action. All rights reserved.

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Editorial

Doing What's Right

THE IZAAK WALTON LEAGUE recently adopted a new code of ethics for hunters. It is part of the league's campaign to focus attention on ethics and hunter behavior, deciding factors in determining how long the hunting tradition continues. Few people would disagree that the league is on a good track, but some would question what benefit more words will bring.

I took my hunter education course in 1973 at the age of 12, and I distinctly remember the course stressing the importance of being an ethical, honest and safe hunter. "We're not here to teach you how to be a good hunter," an instructor said. "We're here to teach you how to be a *good* hunter." By the latter "good" he meant I shouldn't trespass, shoot over the limit or take a shot I wasn't sure was completely safe.

It seems sportsmen and women of the early '70s suddenly became aware that the unlawful and unethical actions of a few were painting a bad picture of all of us. We decided to rid ourselves of the slob "hunter" and show the public we were upright stewards of the natural environment. Back then the threat from the "antis" was quite small, unorganized and not well funded. Other things were different, too; school teachers weren't telling me and my classmates about the evils of guns or the horrors of the hunt. At least they weren't in small, rural towns like the one where I grew up.

Those days saw the beginnings of programs across the country that were going to drive the undesirables from our ranks. Campaigns such as the Commission's Sportsmen Policing Our Ranks Together have been successful in providing a means for us to turn in those who would steal wildlife and tarnish the image of hunting. If that sort of ease and efficiency of reporting weren't around today, the state's birds and mammals would be much the worse for it. But reporting programs, like credos, mottos and slogans, don't go far enough — because they can't. After decades of effort, we have yet to get through to everyone; a few unethical people remain, and they give the rest of us a black eye.

It seems the reason groups such as Izaak Walton must continually reexamine the hunter's image is that the root of the problem lies in personal responsibility. We can throw words and slogans and public relations campaigns at it all we like but, try as we might, we cannot legislate, regulate or eliminate human behavior. The only thing we can do is try to influence it, and there's no better place to start than with ourselves and our hunting partners.

Read the Izaak Walton code in "Conservation News" on page 43, but don't just give it — or any other ethics guide — lip service. Consider what's being said, and why someone thought it important to remind us to follow the rules, sometimes especially the unwritten ones.

It may be that the outdoor community is guilty of repeating itself too often, and in that repetition losing the importance of its message. All fellow sportspeople ask of each other is that we consider the consequences of our actions and take responsibility for them. Wildlife conservation officers and our compatriots won't see our every move; each individual must know what is right. We should ask of ourselves and of our hunting companions whether we're *good* hunters, and we must realize that those of us who are afield today will — by our actions and inactions — decide the future of the outdoor sports. — J. Scott Rupp

Letters

Editor:

Please reconsider the use of the glaring paper you're now using. It's become most difficult to read "our" News.

Yes, I am a longtime subscriber, but this letter was actually prompted after conversations with younger readers.

This lone criticism, I know, voices the opinion of many other readers.

R. SCHEIB,
PITTSBURGH

Editor:

I disagree with the letter in the August issue about opening deer season on a Saturday and allowing hunting on Sundays. Employers and employees wouldn't save any money. Hunters would leave either Thursday night or Friday morning. The only difference would be that hunters would lose one day to prepare.

Over the years the Pennsylvania Federation of Sportsmen's Clubs has voted down several resolutions concerning such changes.

As to Sunday hunting, with all the "bleeding hearts" out to do away with hunting and firearms, why would we subject our friends who reserve that day for peace and meditation to rifle and shotgun noise?

And if that's not reason enough, why not just be good sportsmen and give the game a rest, too.

L. SECOY,
POINT MARION

Editor:

I have been subscribing to the *Game News* on and off for 30 years, and when I was young I worked on two

farms — one in New Jersey and one here.

I have never seen a more harebrained thing than "100 Miles," about streambank fencing, in the August issue.

There are 101 other things that get into streams — chemicals for one — that do a lot more damage than cow plops, which have been going into streams for hundreds of years.

Those environmental wackos should start worrying about something important.

J.L. MACK,
BETHEL PARK

Editor:

I'm concerned about all the deer season extensions. I feel this is the reason for low deer populations in my area.

The number of deer killed now is half what it used to be because too many doe are being killed.

I know other areas may be different, but I feel one day of doe season in Cambria County is enough.

In closing, I think a survey should be conducted in this area for other hunters to share their opinions.

T. GWIZDAK,
NICKTOWN

Editor:

Since the Game Commission has granted more hunting time to the archery hunters, why not a hunting season for handgunners? After all, a handgun is a close range weapon, and I feel that the hunters who would rather use a revolver should

be granted the same privilege as rifle, flintlock and bow hunters.

M. SMITH,
AMBRIDGE

Editor:

In the June and August issues were letters requesting how-to articles. All anybody who wants how-to articles has to do is subscribe to any national outdoor magazine. That's all they publish anymore: How-to, Why, When, What if. I've been reading *Game News* for many years, and it's one magazine that has good stories and articles. Keep *Game News* the way it is.

If it's not broke, don't fix it.

R. LONG,
BEDFORD

Editor:

I really loved the August cover. When I first saw the issue I thought it was something from the National Weimaraner Club. So I was surprised when I found it was *Game News*.

I'm sure our national club is going to be interested in the painting; full color Weimaraner art is very hard, if not impossible, to find. I've had Weimaraners since 1977, and I live to hunt and field trial them.

Thank you for an always interesting magazine. Only one suggestion: How about a dog training column like you had in the 1950s?

R. COCCIA,
LAUREL VALLEY

**Your comments are welcome. Mail them to "Letters,"
2001 Elmerton Ave., Harrisburg, PA 17110-9797.
Letters will be edited for brevity and clarity.**

1993 SEASON FORECAST

No one knows more about what's going on with game populations than the biologists in the wildlife management bureau. We asked them to share some of their observations.

COMPILED BY J. SCOTT RUPP

PHOTOS BY HAL KORBER

ALMOST ALL the state's furbearer species are underutilized by our trappers and hunters. Species such as fox, raccoon and muskrat aren't

being sought by sportsmen as they once were, mostly due to

FURBEARERS ARNOLD HAYDEN

low fur prices. Nonetheless, more and more sportsmen are discovering the challenge of hunting and trapping coyotes, whose populations continue to rise.

Red foxes are abundant across their prime habitat, primarily agricultural land. The only areas of the state where red foxes may be declining are those where agricultural lands are significantly broken up with forest — marginal habitat for the red in the first place. There, increasing populations of coyotes may be having an impact on the red fox.

Not so for the gray fox, an animal of the brush. The gray lives well with the coyote, possibly because the smaller canid is better equipped to escape from its much larger relative.

It seems likely a resurgence of rabies in raccoons is coming; populations are high in many areas. Few people are trapping coons, as indicated by the number of animals harvested. For instance, back in the 1970s when fur prices were high, Pennsylvania hunters and trappers accounted for about 900,000 rac-

coons in a single year — about 20 raccoons per square mile. Last year the harvest was only 124,000 — about three per square mile.

We may see more diseases such as rabies and mange occurring in some furbearing species — notably raccoons, foxes and coyotes — as populations reach their peaks. Those who harvest furbearers should take precautions. Be careful when dispatching animals and wear gloves when skinning them.

Muskrat populations again appear to be faring well; trapper participation remains low. In many areas, populations have reached their peaks. Even though fur prices aren't very high, muskrat trapping continues to be an excellent pastime for young people. While only about 135,000 'rats were taken last year, the number is merely a reflection of fewer people trapping.

Beavers, historically an important furbearing species, are now as vital to the creation and maintenance of wetlands as



they were commerce to the fur trade of the 18th and 19th centuries. Our beaver management program is designed to keep 30 to 35 percent of beaver habitat occupied and creating and maintaining wetlands.

Overall, beaver populations are in good shape, although there was a slight decline in Zone 3 — possibly due to the drought that occurred three years ago. Most of the furbearer management zones have not reached their harvest goals, and the Commission's furbearer management unit is investigating raising the limits in some zones. Too many beavers in an area leads to degraded wetland habitat.

Beaver trappers are a dedicated lot, and their numbers, about 2,000, have been fairly constant for several years. In zones where a majority of trappers take up to the limit and where harvests aren't reaching goals, it's possible that raising limits will allow us to hit our targets.

1992-93 Beaver Harvest			
Zone	Pop.	Goal	Harvest
1	5,311	1,327	1,342
2	7,091	1,738	1,259
3	5,851	1,463	1,044
4	4,036	988	612
5	570	155	130
6	228	57	118
Statewide	23,087	5,728	4,505

Coyotes continue to expand across the state. Our conservative estimates put the population at about 12,000. We're starting to see more sportsmen and women pursuing the species, and items such as coyote calls are beginning to show up at sporting goods dealers.

Coyotes may no longer be hunted on Sundays because they have been reclassified as furbearers. They still may be trapped and hunted with a furtaker license and hunted with a hunting license.

Coyote pelts, which once had little value beyond taxidermy projects, last spring brought as much as \$40.

Hunters and trappers, who took about 4,400 coyotes last year, have had little

effect on the population. As the animals begin to fill the available habitats, diseases such as distemper and mange will take their toll.

THE WOODCOCK SEASON will again be two weeks long this year, running from Oct. 23 to Nov. 6, and the bag limit re-

WOODCOCK
LINCOLN LANG

mains at three birds per day and six in possession. Our season is timed to take advantage of migrating woodcock and therefore reduce pressure on resident birds.

Last year's season, although short, seemed to coincide with the flights of migrants very well. Flushing rates were the highest we ever recorded, just over two an hour. The average bag per hunt reported to the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service for state hunters went from 1.5 to 2.2, and the average season bag went from 3.5 to 6.5.

These favorable statistics don't indicate rising woodcock populations, but rather they result from last year's ideal hunting conditions. During the two-week season, we experienced moist weather and southerly winds, which stalled many flight birds in Pennsylvania coverts.

Woodcock populations remain depressed. The ratio of immatures to adult females was down more than 17 percent in the eastern region, according to USFWS research. The results of the singing-ground survey we conducted this past spring were on par with what we found in 1992, which was the poorest year on record.

Pennsylvania is taking a leadership role in setting its woodcock seasons and bag limits. USFWS has established a 45-day framework within which states in the east-



ern flyway can set their seasons. While some states surrounding us take full advantage of those 45 days, we're restraining ourselves.

Based on our population data and our hunting pressure, we believe it is in the best interest of the resource to keep the season short. We hope other states in the flyway will look at the woodcock's decline and set their seasons accordingly.

DESPITE THE "BLIZZARD of '93," winter turkey losses were light. Commission field officers found only 17 dead turkeys during winter surveys, 15 of which were discovered in the Northcentral.

TURKEY **BILL SHOPE**

Overwinter turkey survival appears to have been good despite the harsh conditions in March and April. High winds that accompanied the heavy snows kept the ground open in many areas, enabling turkeys to find food.

In addition, turkeys were able to walk on the snow in some areas and eat dried fruits, seeds and buds from vegetation that protruded above the snow.

Our 1993 reported spring turkey harvest was the highest on record, exceeding the 1992 spring harvest by 23 percent. In contrast, the reported 1992 fall harvest was 38 percent below 1991's.

Turkey hunters responding to the 1992 Game-Take Survey reported hunting 18 percent fewer days than in 1991, and 1992 fall turkey success rates dropped by 18 percent — falling from 38 turkeys per 1,000 man-days to 31.

Some of the drop in turkey hunting effort in 1992 may have been the result of the season framework. Management Area

No. 7, the big southcentral unit, was kept at two weeks.

Regardless of how one views the data, it's important to recognize that the '91 fall harvest was the highest on record; the '92 kill wasn't so much low as it was average.

We expected a drop in fall turkey harvests because field officers recorded about a third fewer turkeys during summer surveys in 1992 than in 1991. The drop was most noticeable in the southern part of the state: Management Areas 6, 7 and 8. Heavy rains during the nesting season apparently affected turkey productivity in significant parts of these areas.

Field personnel were still conducting the summer turkey survey at press time. But the record spring harvest indicates a good carry-over of birds from the 1992 fall population. This carry-over, plus better spring nesting conditions, should result in a better than average fall population in 1993. Preliminary reports from field officers in June were encouraging.

THE MOST SIGNIFICANT change that affects waterfowlers this year is the halving of Crawford County's goose season to 35

WATERFOWL **JOHN DUNN**

days (waterfowl seasons and bag limits are on p. 40). A serious decline in the

Southern James Bay goose population has caused the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service to cut back drastically on seasons in the Atlantic and Mississippi flyways; Canadian wildlife officials have imposed similar measures in Ontario.

The restrictions are intended to reduce the harvest of Southern James Bay geese by 50 percent. Geese in that region have had poor nesting seasons for the past several years, and this year nesting was at a record low. It's hoped the restrictions, which will be in place for at least three years (geese don't breed until they're three years old), will bring goose numbers back up. Forty percent of Crawford County's harvest is comprised of Southern James Bay geese.





Our spring breeding surveys showed an increase of 30 percent in mallards and 18 percent in woodies. Banding operations conducted in the northern half of the state yielded good numbers of young mallards, due to excellent nesting habitat there this year.

Dry conditions in the southern half of the state may have limited production of both mallards and wood ducks.

It's worth noting that green-winged teal numbers are down 50 percent from last year because of poor nesting in Canada. Bluewings are down 23 percent from their long-term average, primarily because of poor nesting in the prairie region.

The prairie droughts of the past several years have also depressed pintail populations, which are down 54 percent from their long-term average.

Gadwalls and northern shovelers are two species that are faring well because they breed in the northcentral U.S., where conditions have been good. Shovelers are up 34 percent; gadwalls, 18 percent.

TOUGH WINTER CONDITIONS in late March and early April had little effect on deer; winter-related losses were only slightly above normal.

DEER
BILL SHOPE

For a perspective, consider the hard winter of 1977-78.

Winter mortality in 1978 was fairly high in many parts of the state; WCOs in the Northcentral found just over three dead deer per mile in 1978. By contrast, they



While the midwinter survey of Atlantic Flyway Canada geese was the lowest on record — 569,000 — some improvement was seen in the Atlantic population, which breeds on the Ungava Peninsula in northern Quebec.

USFWS implemented restrictions to lower harvests of that population last year, cutting season lengths and staggering bag limits across the season. The measures worked, and the take dropped by more than half.

The good news for the Atlantic geese is that nesting conditions improved this year. While there were very few juvenile birds in last year's fall flights (a sign of poor nesting) we should see more young birds and a better fall flight overall this year.

Although 1993 goose hunting opportunities for migrants have been curtailed, Pennsylvania's resident flock continues to grow. Due in part to federal restrictions placed on goose hunting, the population that nests and lives in the state year-round has grown to between 90,000 and 100,000 birds. A late resident goose season is again scheduled for early 1994.

About 10 percent of the state's duck harvest comes from the Prairie Pothole Region. Overall, nesting there declined 11 percent this year, one year after it had increased 11 percent. However, areas of the Dakotas and Montana had abundant rainfall and some of the best nesting conditions in 10 years. Fall flights coming in from the prairie area will be similar to last year.

In eastern Canada, which produces the majority of our ducks, nesting conditions improved and fall flights should be better this year. Likewise, we saw increased populations of our state breeding mallards and wood ducks — although numbers for those two species throughout the Atlantic Flyway were down.

found less than one deer for every two miles this year.

Statewide, we lost about a fifth of what we did in '78. Although the slight winter losses may affect hunting in some localities, the majority of the state's deer hunters won't notice any changes resulting from winter kill.

We project a fall deer population of approximately 972,000 animals, which is similar to last year's. Preseason deer density runs about 36 deer per square mile of forested habitat. The lowest projected county density is 22 deer per forested square mile in Clinton County, and the highest is 71 in York County.

We expect the buck harvest to be at least 141,000 animals, and the antlerless harvest should fall between 195,000 and 235,000 animals. If we reach those harvests, the 1993 overwinter deer population should be about 7 percent lower than in 1992.

The expected reduction will help move the overwinter deer population closer to the Commission's goal of 21 deer per for-

ested square mile; the figure was about 24 per forested square mile at the end of the 1992 season.

BASED ON SPRING CROWING counts, ringneck pheasant densities are about what they were last year. Field reports in some

parts of the state indicated there was good reproduction in limited areas, but

overall the native pheasant population remains extremely low — less than one bird per square mile.

The Commission begins its pheasant restoration project this fall, and six areas will be closed to hunting (see accompanying list). More than 7,200 ringnecks and 7,100 Sichuan pheasants will be stocked on the study areas, which will be closed for up to six years.

The study will evaluate whether self-sustaining pheasant populations can be returned to the state under current agricul-

SMALL GAME TOM HARDISKY

AREAS CLOSED TO PHEASANT HUNTING

Crawford County: South of Rt. 198 from Saegertown to Rt. 77; south of Rt. 77 to Rt. 408; west of Rt. 408 to SR 2017 (Fauncetown Road); west of SR 2017 to Rt. 27; west of Rt. 27 to the Crawford/Venango County line; west of Crawford/Venango and Crawford/Mercer County lines to Rt. 322; east of Rt. 322 to Rts. 6 & 19; then east of Rts. 6 & 19 to Rt. 198.

Erie County: All of Amity, Union, Wayne and Concord townships.

Juniata County: South of the Juniata/Mifflin and Juniata/Snyder County lines from the Juniata River to SR 2019; west of SR 2019 to the Juniata/Perry County line; north of the Juniata/Perry County line to Rts. 322 & 22; north of Rts. 322 & 22 to Rt. 333; west of Rt. 333 to the Juniata River; north of the Juniata River to the Juniata/Mifflin County line.

Centre County: All of Potter, Gregg, Penn, Miles and Haines townships.

Northumberland, Montour and Columbia counties: South of Rt. 11 from Rt. 147 in Northumberland to Rt. 42; west of Rt. 42 in Montour, Catawissa, Franklin, Cleveland and Locust townships, Columbia County; Ralpho Township (Northumberland County) east of Rt. 54 to SR 2016 (Airport Road), north of SR 2016 to SR 2020 (Red Hill Road), north of SR 2020 to Rt. 61, and east of Rt. 61 to SR 4026 (Irish Valley Road); north of SR 4026 to Rt. 890; east of Rt. 890 to SR 4018 (Brush Valley Road); north of SR 4018 to Rt. 147; and east of Rt. 147 to Rt. 11.

Dauphin and Schuylkill counties: Upper Paxton Township east of Rt. 147, and all of Mifflin, Washington, Lykens, Wiconisco, and Williams townships in Dauphin County; Hubley Township in Schuylkill County.

tural conditions. The Sichuan pheasant is known to use different cover types than the ringneck, showing a preference for woody or brushy cover. Much ring-necked pheasant nesting takes place in agricultural grass fields, and spring mortality is high due to hay mowing.

We've heard many reports that surplus Sichuans released in some parts of the state made it through the winter. This may suggest Sichuans are better able to survive Pennsylvania winters, given the habitat conditions that exist now.

Surplus Sichuans, those over and above the study needs, will be released again this year in parts of Lycoming, Blair and Crawford counties.

More than 200,000 ringnecks will be stocked throughout the state, and sportsmen and women who hunt with dogs should note that 31,000 hens were put out just a few weeks ago for dog training opportunities.

Habitat plays a major role in the survival of the state's native bobwhite quail populations, perhaps a little more so than for other species. Food and cover for quail must be very close together and must be available throughout the year. Suitable quail habitat has disappeared as modern farming practices have separated food from escape cover in many instances.

Quail calling counts conducted last spring were far below those of past years, probably because of winter mortality. The native quail population has been declining for at least eight years, and counties that still have significant, self-sustaining populations are closed to quail hunting.

The cottontail rabbit fared okay through the winter. The brief period of heavy snow didn't cause much mortality, and reproduction was pretty good, based on field observations. While it's hard to call rabbit numbers excellent, their populations are healthy in suitable habitat.

The news on squirrels is good. Production is up in some areas that had been devastated by gypsy moths. As the mast crop returns following infestations, squirrel reproduction is also increasing. In all,



squirrel hunting opportunities should be excellent across much of the commonwealth.

LAST YEAR we thought 1992-93 was going to be a very good season, based on summer brood sightings and other data we had on hand.

GROUSE
BILL PALMER

But it turned out to be only an average year.

The flushing counts reported by grouse hunting cooperators averaged 1.4 flushes per hour, which is comparable to the flushing rate average of the past 10 years. That figure is down somewhat from 1991-92.

Grouse hunters won't see big changes either way in bird numbers this fall. Brood sightings and total grouse observations were down slightly in June and July, but it's hard to draw conclusions without August data (unavailable at press time). Observations are recorded on game lands throughout the state by foresters, surveyors and wildlife technicians.

On a regional level, the following flushing rates were reported: Northwest, 1.5; Southwest, 1.7; Northcentral, 1.5; Southcentral, 1.5; Northeast, 1.1; and Southeast, 0.7. One observation which has continued to hold true is that counties with extended grouse seasons tend to have flushing rates slightly below the state average.

We're completing a study on the impact of late grouse hunting, and we plan to make recommendations at the January Commission meeting concerning seasons and bag limits.

We're still looking for more grouse co-

operators. Cooperators provide us with invaluable data by recording their hunting hours and number of flushes. The Bureau of Wildlife Management would like to have more hunters involved, and interested sportsmen and women should contact the bureau at the Commission's Harrisburg headquarters.

THE STATE'S BEAR population remains at about 7,500 animals, pretty much where it's been for the past 10 years. Pennsylvania's

BLACK BEAR GARY ALT

bear management system is in the enviable position of having attained a

good balance between supply and demand. Anyone may buy a license and participate in the hunt, and each year about 93,000 hunters kill about 1,500 to 1,600 bears — a harvest that keeps the population stable.

The management plan for bears has remained unchanged, but we have drawn up alternative strategies that include bear management zones.

Bear check stations and bear license applications give us excellent data, and from those numbers we know how hunting pressure affects harvest.

Numbers remain stable in main bear range, but populations in the peripheral range continue to increase and expand. In the past several years, bear have been taken in counties that had never recorded kills before. Lehigh County joined the list last year, bringing to 52 the number of Pennsylvania counties in which bears have been harvested.

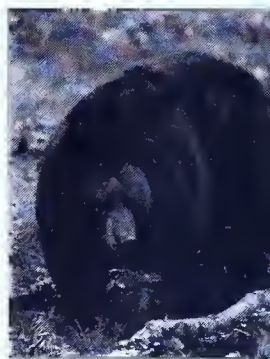
Hunters should keep in mind that while bears are spread across the commonwealth, their numbers are highest in good bear habitat. While a county's harvest figure indicates its potential, the majority of the harvest usually comes from certain areas of that county — areas that feature good habitat.

Bears prefer thick swamps, brushy sidehills, rejuvenating timber cuts and other heavy cover, and they like to feed in areas that have a lot of acorns or beechnuts.

The state contains two major bear populations, one in the Poconos and the other in the Northcentral. Within these prime areas, four counties stand out in terms of bear harvest. Pike and the northern part of Monroe County are big producers in the Poconos; Lycoming and Clinton lead the Northcentral.

An intriguing trend has surfaced in Armstrong, Indiana, Cambria, Blair, Westmoreland, Fayette, Somerset and Bedford counties. From 1949 to 1976, the average harvest for those eight counties was four bears. For the years 1985 through 1992, the average for the same area was 103 — more than a 25-fold increase.

The meteoric rise can be traced to two factors. With the exception of 1979, between 1977 and 1984, all or some of those counties were closed to bear hunting. Also a number of pregnant females or females with cubs were moved to the region during that time.



Fluorescent orange — for your safety

MORE THAN A MILLION hunters will be afield in Pennsylvania at one time or another this autumn, and with that many people it's vitally important to think safety first. Beginning with the grouse and squirrel seasons, all hunters (except dove and crow hunters and waterfowlers) must wear 250 square inches of fluorescent orange on the head, chest and back combined that is visible for 360 degrees. Bowhunters are covered by this regulation during the portion of archery season that overlaps general small game. The regulations remain in effect through general small game, turkey, bear, deer and post-Christmas small game seasons. Flintlock hunters and second-season archers are exempt.

10 Minutes to SQUIRRELS



Leonard Lee Rue III

If you're among those who crave the taste of squirrels but don't look forward to cleaning them, here's a quick and easy method to get them ready for the pan.

By Charles E. Branthoover
illustrations by Doug Pifer

IF YOU LIKE to hunt and eat squirrels but hate to clean them, throw away your skinning board and nails, get out your stopwatch, and read on. Here's how to clean and cut up a squirrel easily — in less than 10 minutes.

All you need is a cutting board and two knives. One knife should have a sharp, thin blade, and the other should be a heavy kitchen knife.

The method won't work if the squirrel is already gutted. It isn't harmful to leave entrails in the animal for a reasonable

length of time. It'll keep till the end of the day.

First, lay the squirrel belly down on the cutting board, legs extended to the sides. If the squirrel is stiffened and curled, stretch it into position.

Using the thin-bladed knife, slice carefully under the skin of the squirrel's back — beginning at the base of the tail and stopping at the base of the skull (**Fig. 1**). Be careful not to cut into the meat.

The easiest way is to turn the knife on its side as you probe under the skin toward the

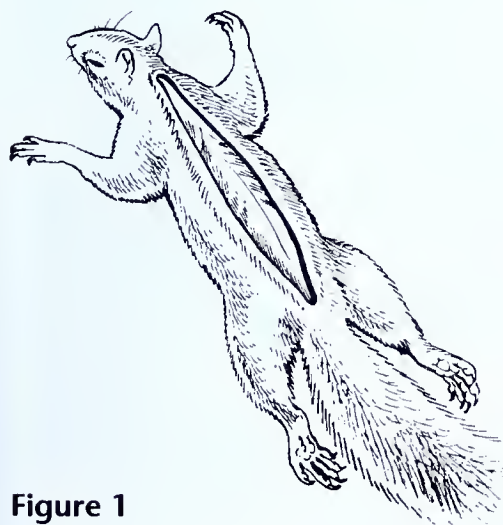


Figure 1



Figure 2

head, then rotate the knife and cut upward.

Once the cut is made, roll the squirrel on its side and work the hide loose with your fingers and the thin knife. Work the hide as far around the belly as you can reach, then do the other side.

Completely free the hide from the mid-section (**Fig. 2**), which can be done with the fingers. Grasp the squirrel in one hand and pull the loosened hide toward the head as far as it will go. Turn the squirrel in your hand and this time pull the hide toward the tail as far as it will go.

Next, lay the squirrel on the cutting board and free each of the four legs, peeling the hide down to the ankle joints. Then pull the hide to the base of the tail and head respectively (**Figs. 3 & 4**).

Sever the four feet, tail and head with the heavy knife. Lay the squirrel on its back and spread the back legs to expose the pelvis. Split the pelvis with the big knife.

With the squirrel still on its back, use the thin knife to cut the body cavity, beginning at the neck and ending at the pelvis.

The thin knife will easily cut through the ribs, but be careful you don't slice into the intestines. Cutting upward and away from the squirrel should prevent this.

Using two fingers and a thumb you can now remove the entrails by pulling them out from the chest cavity toward the pelvis. With the entrails completely removed, wash the carcass under running water to remove blood and hair.

Wipe off the cutting board and lay the carcass on its back once again. Then take the heavy knife and make the following cuts (**Fig. 5**):

1. Cut across the spine just in front of the hips.
2. & 3. Follow the last rib on each side, and cut toward and through the spine.
4. & 5. Remove each front leg by cutting between the shoulder blade and the rib cage.
6. Split the back legs apart at the spine.

Finally, split the rib cage lengthwise. This is easier to do if you first spread it open until it breaks on one side or the other, and then cut it where it breaks.



Figure 3



Figure 4

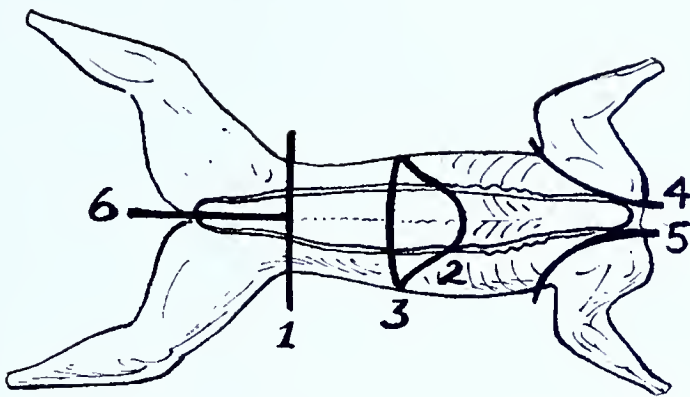


Figure 5

Your finished squirrel should look like Figure 6.

Put the pieces in a bowl of water and cover with a generous amount of table salt. Place the bowl in the refrigerator overnight. Rinse the next day and it's ready for your favorite recipe.

Preparation time is less than 10 minutes. The more you use this method the faster you'll get. For people who relish the taste of squirrel meat, it's the quickest — and therefore best — way to go.

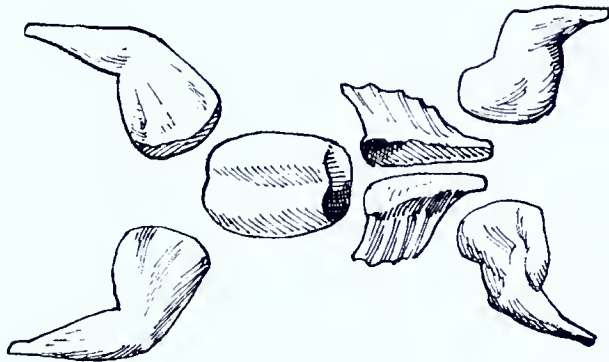


Figure 6

SQUIRREL STEW

INGREDIENTS: 1/2 cup vinegar, 1 3/4 tsp. mixed spices, 1 diced onion, celery leaves from 3 stalks, 3/4 tsp. salt, 1/4 tsp. pepper, 2 diced carrots

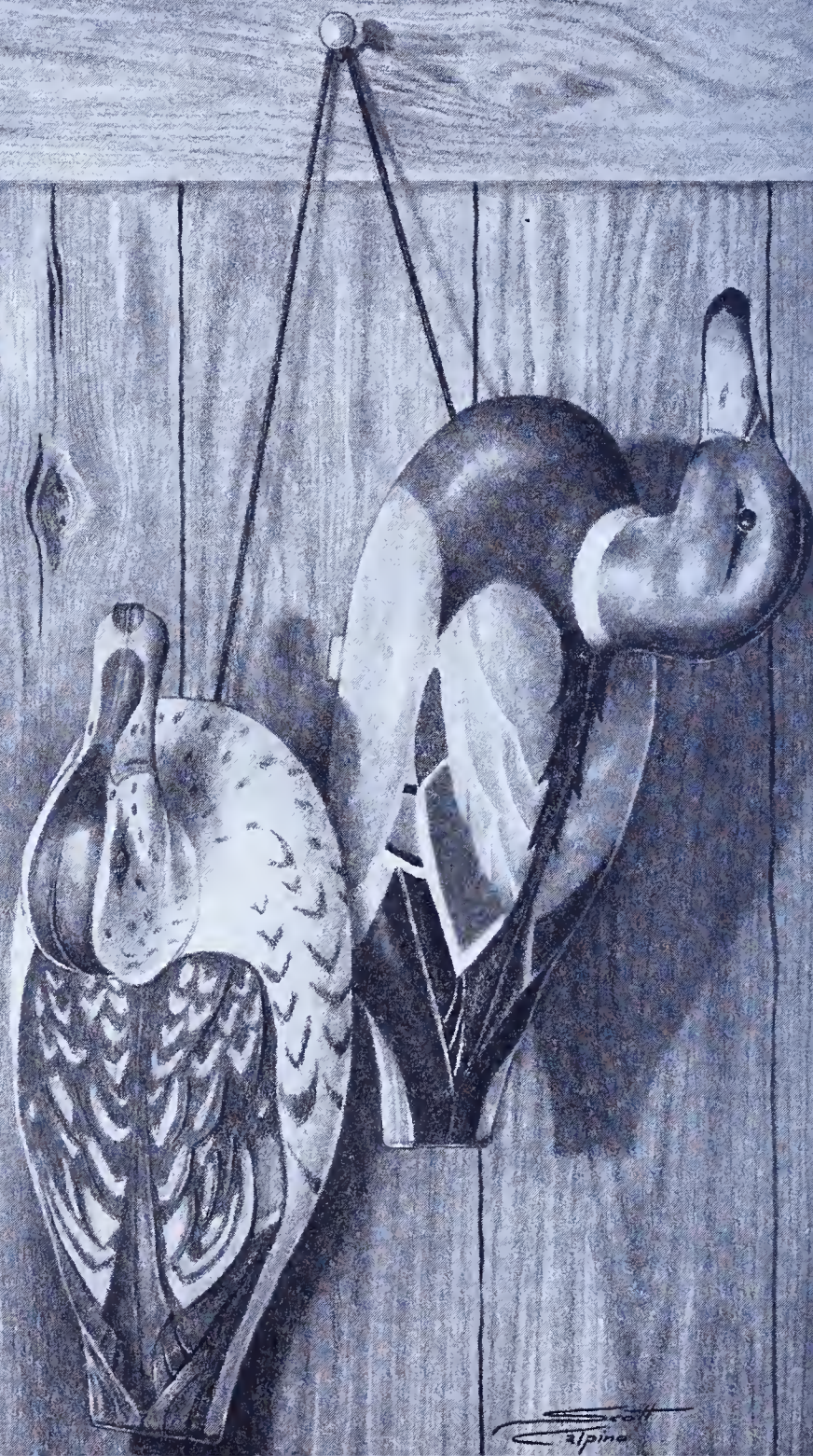
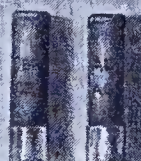
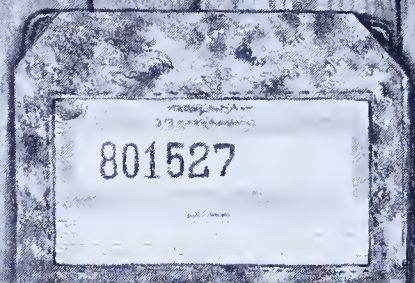
Combined processed squirrel and vinegar, mixed spices, onion and celery leaves in deep pot. Cover with water and let stand three hours. Drain and brown squirrel in 375-degree oven. Add remaining ingredients and again cover with water. Cook until tender.

FRICASSEED SQUIRREL

INGREDIENTS: 1/4 cup flour, 3 slices bacon cut into small pieces, 1/2 tsp. thyme, salt and pepper, 1 small onion sliced, 2 tsp. lemon juice, 1/2 cup meat bouillon

Rub pieces from one squirrel in salt and pepper and roll in flour. Fry in heavy skillet with bacon pieces until brown on all sides. Add rest of ingredients, cover and simmer for about one hour. Serve with buttered noodles, using the broth as a sauce.

Taken from **Pennsylvania Game Cookbook**, available from the Game Commission, Dept. MS, 2001 Elmerton Ave., Harrisburg, PA 17110-9797. Cost, including delivery, is \$4. Pennsylvania residents must add 6 percent sales tax.



Scott
Alpina

The Boys from Chesapeake

The new kids didn't want to hunt squirrels or turkeys or even deer. They were after ducks. The locals thought they were crazy.

HUNTING has always been an important pastime for young people throughout rural America. Our forefathers learned how to hunt from their forefathers and, in turn, passed that information on down the line until it reached us modern woodsmen.

As kids we learned to hunt the game animals that lived in our neck of the woods from the greatest hunters we'd ever known. And now that we've reached adulthood, it's sometimes hard to consider doing things any differently. In fact, there are those among us who refuse to consider any changes at all.

For instance, when I was growing up in central Pennsylvania, our hunting season began with squirrels in October, progressed through rabbits, pheasants, grouse and wild turkeys during November, and culminated with white-tailed deer season in December.

For the true diehard, there were the filler seasons — crow, groundhog, dove and raccoon, for example — that took up the rest of the year.

Game was plentiful, and even though we didn't often see many deer or turkeys, we did see some, and we always ran into lots of small game. But back then, with all of that other stuff to hunt, it never really occurred to me to try my hand at duck hunting.

No one I knew hunted ducks, or even knew anything about waterfowling. Therefore, as far as I was concerned, duck hunt-

ing was something only done somewhere else.

If I had never found out otherwise, my life now might be much simpler. It would certainly be less cluttered, without decoys, duck calls and Labrador retrievers. But I also feel it would be less full if I had never seen the sunrise from the middle of a stand of cattails, or never known the thrill of retrieving my first decoyed wood ducks.

And in my case I owe those experiences not to my forefathers but to two other great hunters and a part-time job I held at our local general store.

When Rick and Willie wandered into Miller's General Store for the first time, they looked like most of us local teenagers. Rick was tall and lanky with sandy blond hair, and must have been about 17 years old. Willie was a slightly smaller version of the same kid and looked to be about a year younger.

They were dressed in jeans and T-shirts, topped off by the usual freebie ball caps. But it didn't take long for them to distinguish themselves as strangers to the folks around Miller's. In fact as soon as Rick spoke, his heavy Chesapeake drawl immediately earned him a reputation as a foreigner.

Both boys were polite and talked freely with the old-timers at Miller's who, even though it was early July, were nonetheless gathered around the wood stove. Rick said his family had just moved into the old Turner place on the other side of the lake.

By Michael L. Morgart

Their father had been transferred to work on a pipeline in the area for about eight months and had brought the family along. The boys would be starting school in the fall, of course, but for the rest of the summer they planned to explore the lake.

Eventually the conversation took the usual turn toward hunting, and the old-timers told the boys how great the small game and deer hunting were around the lake, and how lucky the newcomers were to be spending the hunting season there. That interested the boys, but their real concerns leaned more toward the quality of duck hunting on the lake.

At first, the old-timers laughed at the question, but after Rick and Willie pleaded seriousness, the men just sort of stared in amazement. Then one of them explained that in all the years he'd lived near the lake — which numbered into the 70s — he'd never heard of anyone but Red Wilson trying to hunt ducks there.

It seems Red had been fishing from a canoe one day and, since squirrel season was also in, happened to have his 12-gauge double-barrel with him. When a wayward pair of mallards flew near, Red dropped his pole and grabbed the shotgun. Unfortu-

nately he grabbed the gun by the triggers and both barrels went off, blowing a cat-size hole in the bottom of the canoe.

The blast knocked Red overboard, sank the canoe, and sent the double-barrel and fishing gear to the bottom of the lake. Needless to say, Red missed the ducks.

Rick and Willie enjoyed the story, but they didn't understand why no one ever hunted ducks there. The best answer anybody could give was that there was much more game around the lake than on it, so no one bothered with the ducks.

Rick explained that duck hunting was a way of life where they had come from, and that he and Willie didn't much like the prospects of a hunting season without waterfowl.

It didn't take long for the boys to get settled into the area. Their next trip to Miller's was to pick up some caulk and paint to fix up an old rowboat they'd gotten from one of the locals in exchange for painting his tractor shed.

He'd offered the boys the leftover paint too, but they mumbled something about red boats not blending in well with the scenery, and respectfully declined.

The rowboat restoration project kept Rick and Willie busy for a week or so, but by the first of August the boys were seen daily rowing their boat around the lake. It appeared sturdy and watertight, but the tan and brown camouflage pattern painted on both the inside and out gave the old-timers plenty of fuel for discussion around the cold wood stove.

Every day the boys explored the lake and its surrounding swamps and marshes. The lake itself, not large by anybody's standards, covered only about 120 acres. The swamp and marshy area near the headwaters, however, covered several dozen more acres where there were no cabins and seldom any human intrusions.

In that swampy area Rick and Willie found what they were looking for. They

ALTHOUGH THEY saw mostly mallards during their scouting trips, the marsh also hosted a fair number of wood ducks.



AS SEPTEMBER went by, the boys began to see teal and other migrants that visited the lake on stopover flights.

located a small cove that projected from the lake into the swamp. Among the dead trees and snags in the cove were several grassy hummocks surrounded by stands of tall cattails. The boys decided to build a duck blind in one of those patches.

During their excursions the boys saw a variety of ducks. Mallards were the most common, but occasionally they saw the more timid wood ducks feeding among the drowned trees in the swamp or disappearing into the marsh grass.

As September went by, teal and other migrants also began visiting the lake on stopover flights. And the boys saw plenty of squirrels, deer and other game animals that the old-timers had talked about. They often laughed when they thought of how the wildlife they saw had probably been using the swampy fringe areas of the lake to evade hunters for years.

Rick and Willie began work on their blind in mid-September. First they tore apart pallets and packing crates from the General Store and used the wood to construct a frame. The frame itself was about eight feet long and four feet deep with walls four feet high, and a floor to keep the boys out of the mud.

Once the frame was built, they cut and tied bundles of cattails and marsh grass, and lashed them to the frame for camouflage. Finally they furnished the blind with two packing crate seats, a crude gun rest, a shelf for shotgun shells, and a few nail hangers for duck calls, decoy bags and other gear.

Collecting all that material and hauling it by rowboat out into the swamp was more than the old-timers could stand. They tried their best to convince the boys that their time would be better spent searching for perfect deer stands or practicing their turkey calls, but Rick and Willie weren't dissuaded.

They spent their free time during the end of September and the beginning of October patching and repairing the old



decoys that they'd brought with them from Virginia, and they even tried their hand at making a few new ones of their own design.

By the time the week before duck season rolled around the boys had nearly everything ready for their hunt. Two days before the season opened, Rick and Willie stopped at Miller's to buy shotgun shells. When they asked me for the box of 12-gauge shells, the old-timers quizzed them about their choice of duck guns.

Old Double-Barrel

Rick said he had an old double-barrel that had belonged to his grandfather and Willie had a single-shot. After a few jokes about the boys needing to use slugs instead of No. 4s, and maybe trading their old worn out guns on new semi-automatics, the men wished the boys good luck and told them they'd be listening for shooting in the swamp come Saturday morning.

Rick and Willie were in the rowboat by five o'clock that Saturday morning. They rowed to the cove and spread their decoys in a pattern that they hoped would appeal to ducks traveling between the swamp and the lake.

Then they settled into the blind with a thermos of coffee and half of an applesauce cake their mother had made for the occasion. The sky was overcast and the wind from the lake carried the threat of rain, but

the boys loaded their shotguns and waited comfortably. The two were in their element.

As they waited, the swamp came to life. The first creatures to stir were the red-winged blackbirds that would spend the morning chattering and sailing from cattail to willow and back again. But even they fell silent when the shadowy gray form of an owl swooped low over the blind and disappeared into the swamp.

Shortly after sunrise, Willie spotted ducks flying near the other end of the lake. As they reached the middle, Rick blew a few calls to get their attention, and the ducks headed for the cove.

The boys stayed low in the blind as they'd been taught to do, and Rick made some hushed feeding calls for effect. The group of seven wood ducks set their wings and sailed in toward the decoys.

When Rick gave the word, both boys stood and fired. Three shots rang out across the lake and two ducks went down. The rest of the group broke formation and disappeared into the swamp, while a startled heron flapped its way noisily back toward the other end of the lake. Willie rowed out, picked up the two drakes, and hurried back to the blind.

Twenty minutes later another flock crossed the lake and Rick's call brought them winging toward the decoys. That time five or six mallards circled the cove and, when the boys shot, two failed to leave.

From then on Rick and Willie saw only single ducks circling the lake or leaving the swamp, but they each managed to get one more bird. By noon they had collected their decoys and left for home.

The old-timers were waiting for Rick and Willie when they arrived at Miller's General Store that afternoon. They teased the boys about not hearing much shooting

coming from the swamp and about how they must have gotten bored waiting for ducks and switched to hunting squirrels. As always, the boys took the hazing good-naturedly and told the men how right they had been about all of the deer and other game animals living around the lake.

Rick winked at me as I got him another box of 12-gauge shells from under the counter. And as the boys turned to leave for home, Rick told the old-timers to keep an ear toward the lake the next Saturday morning because squirrel season would still be in.

The boys and their family moved back to Virginia the following spring, but in the meantime we got a chance to become good friends. They taught me a lot about their lifestyle along the Chesapeake, and I in turn showed them a few things about life in Pennsylvania.

The next summer I spent much of my spare time exploring the lake and swamp in the camouflaged rowboat that the boys left for me. I found their blind and decided to give duck hunting a try for myself.

I made some minor repairs to the blind and replaced the cattails and marsh grass from the year before. I also ordered a duck call and some factory mallard decoys that I rigged for hunting in the swamp.

As duck season drew near, I listened thoughtfully to the old-timers' hunting stories and was particularly amused when Rick and Willie's names cropped up. A year later the men still couldn't believe those two had been foolish enough to waste their time duck hunting on the lake.

I smiled as I pulled a box of No. 4s out from under the counter for myself. I knew I wouldn't be completely alone in that blind come Saturday morning; somewhere in Virginia there was bound to be a similar duck blind occupied by two young hunters who had changed my way of thinking for a lifetime.

They still couldn't believe the boys had been foolish enough to waste their time duck hunting. I smiled as I pulled a box of No. 4s out from under the counter for myself.

Keystone State Woodcock

By Michael E. Mulvaney

WOODCOCK SIT tight, very tight — so tight, in fact, you practically have to step on them to make 'em fly.

It was late October and I had just spent a half-hour splashing along a flooded stream bottom in the foothills of southwestern Pennsylvania. My old setter, impatient at not finding any birds, had disappeared 10 minutes earlier, scampering up a steep hillside in search of other game.

Stumbling up after her, I soon found the dog locked on point. When a man has hunted with a bird dog for 10 years, he can generally figure out what the dog is working on. In this instance, she stood rock steady with her tail erect and nose glued to the ground. It seemed obvious the old dog was pointing a woodcock.

Cautiously approaching from the side, I moved in for the flush. Nothing happened. I waited. Still nothing happened.

Taking a step closer, I kicked at the ground. That did it. In a brown blur, a woodcock erupted directly in front of the setter's nose and went zig-zagging through a tangle of saplings.

Unconsciously swinging the 20-gauge double, I pointed and fired. At the report, the bird cartwheeled into the thicket and the dog bounded in for the retrieve.

The 'cock was small and had a short bill, indicating it was a male. After inspecting the bird for a moment, I gave the setter a well-deserved doggie biscuit before continuing to hunt the covert.



THE AMERICAN woodcock is perhaps our most unusual looking game bird. It's a favorite of many gunners who hunt with pointing dogs because it tends to hold tight rather than run. This year, woodcock season begins Oct. 23 and ends Nov. 6.



To me, that's what gunning for woodcock is all about; good dog work, good shooting (sometimes) and an appreciation for one of North America's most interesting game birds.

Tagged with bizarre names such as timberdoodle, bogsucker and longbill, the woodcock is certainly one of our most unusual game birds. Topped with a large head, big "bug eyes," a long snout, skinny little legs and a chubby body, the American woodcock looks like a genetic failure. They're not pretty, but they sure are fun to hunt.

Woodcock are migratory, and although a few birds do nest here, the primary breeding grounds are the Canadian provinces of New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, southern Quebec and Ontario. Because Pennsylvania lies smack dab in the middle of the Atlantic Flyway — and because our vast terrain consists of hills, hollows, and north-to-south oriented mountains and valleys — migrating woodcock naturally move through here on their trek south.

Woodcock are creatures of second-growth forests. They're not likely to be found living in mature hardwood forests, and they generally dislike open areas, too. Brushy stream bottoms, birch stands, alder runs and overgrown pastures

featuring briars and saplings are good places to find this bird.

The woodcock's reputation for eating earthworms is well-documented, and although they'll snack on insects and an occasional berry, their metabolism demands a high-protein diet. They primarily eat earthworms — lots of them.

Because of that, woodcock are usually found in moist, boggy areas where they can probe the soft loam with their long, needle-like bills. The birds generally prefer low-lying areas, but there are times when conditions can become too wet even for woodcock.

During a wet fall, when lowlands are flooded, timberdoodles will often move up to drier hillsides. Therefore, it pays to hunt ridgetops

and hillsides as well as bottom lands.

Ordinarily, woodcock are inclined to sit tight and let you walk right by. The best approach is to go slowly and stop often. This stop-'n-go tactic will often rattle a bird into flying.

Although woodcock can be hunted without the aid of canine companionship, a good bird dog is nearly indispensable. Woodcock coverts are almost always composed of thick tangles, and flushing dogs such as springers and Labs can do a good job at sniffing out these thickets.

But because woodcock sit tight, it's the pointing breeds work woodcock to perfection. Setters and pointers have long been traditional favorites here, but Brittanies are good, and I would imagine close-working shorthairs should be just about perfect.

When the flights (large groups of migrators) are in, the shooting can be fast and furious. This type of

fast, close-in shooting puts a premium on quick-pointing scatterguns.

Woodcock are creatures of second-growth forests. They're not likely to be found in mature hardwood forests; they don't like open areas either.





A light, open-bored 20-gauge is ideal, and although I am partial to side-by-sides, I understand those snappy upland-style autoloaders and pump guns handle like batons. Combine one of these with some low-base loads with No. 8 shot and you'll be in business.

A hundred years from now, historians will probably maintain that the 1960s and '70s were the heyday of the woodcock. During those two decades woodcock were, well, "discovered."

Hunters learned that the 'doodles were fairly easy to hunt — certainly easier than grouse. They also found the birds would hold tight for pointing dogs, and, most importantly, woodcock were plentiful.

Unfortunately, in recent years there has been a drastic decline in woodcock populations. Recent reports published by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service indicate woodcock populations (especially here in the East, along the Atlantic Flyway) have dropped as much as 40 percent.

Of course, one reason for this decline is loss of habitat. Another is the increasing number of hunters — something like 20 million. Regardless of the reasons, woodcock are in serious trouble.

For a number of years I lived and hunted in upstate New York. The area resembled one big alder run; it was super woodcock cover. Located a stone's throw from Canada, I had first crack at the little migrants as they crossed the border.

It seemed like their numbers were limitless, and I can recall foolishly shooting at every timberdoodle that popped up. It was a mistake.

Nowadays, sportsmen are becoming increasingly aware of the woodcock's predicament and are taking the initiative to preserve these wonderful birds.

One conservation measure currently endorsed by hunters is to establish a self-

imposed quota. Some hunters decide ahead of time to collect no more than a certain number of birds per season, while others limit themselves to shooting no more than one bird per outing.

Some experienced woodcock hunters refrain from shooting female birds. Although it's tough to do, keep in mind that females are

more plump than males. Also, females usually flush vertically and give the impression they're having trouble gaining altitude.

If a bird flushes right in front of your boots and looks like it's having trouble accelerating, hold your fire. It's probably a female.

Pennsylvania has set its season to coincide with the flights of migrating birds, thereby limiting pressure on local woodcock. The season is only two weeks, Oct. 23 to Nov. 6, and the bag limit is three per day, six in possession. So, if you're looking to expand your bird hunting opportunities this season, give woodcock a try. But remember, woodcock are a vulnerable species and should be treated accordingly.

Some hunters are deciding ahead of time how many woodcock they'll shoot in a season; others limit themselves to one bird per day.

Table 1. Average daily harvest, per hunter, for small game during the 1991-92 and 1992-93 seasons.

Species	1991-92	1992-93	Percent change
Cottontail Rabbit	0.58	0.67	13.9
Ruffed Grouse	0.18	0.19	2.8
Gray Squirrel	0.82	0.97	19.2
Ring-necked Pheasant	0.24	0.29	16.6
American Woodcock	0.44	0.52	17.6
Bobwhite Quail	0.22	0.38	72.7
Mourning Dove	2.35	2.23	-5.7
Geese	0.40	0.42	1.4
Ducks	0.66	0.69	4.5
Snowshoe Hare	0.19	0.34	46.3
Woodchuck	0.97	0.97	-0.1
American Crow	1.16	1.09	-3.7

WHILE THE NUMBER of small game hunters declined last year, the average take among those who did head afield for squirrels, cottontails and most other small game species increased over the previous year's harvest estimates.

1992-93 Game Take & Furtaker Surveys

By Duane R. Diefenbach

**Wildlife Biometrician
Bureau of Wildlife Management**

HUNTERS enjoyed increased small game harvests last year, but as has been the trend in recent years, hunters are spending less time pursuing small game. These findings highlight our 1992-93 Game Take and Furtaker surveys, which are based on the responses of over 10,000 hunters and furtakers.

Each year, for our Game Take Survey, we mail a survey to a random sample of hunting license buyers. We ask, for each species, how many days they hunted, how many animals they bagged, and in which counties they hunted. For our Furtaker Survey, we ask furtaker licenses buyers where they trapped or hunted and how many furbearers they harvested. This in-

formation allows us to estimate annual harvests, hunter participation and success rates.

The ratio of harvest to days of hunting recreation (hunter-days) for all small game species (see Table 1) increased for all species except mourning doves, woodchucks and crows. However, the declines in hunting success for these three species are insignificant.

Unfortunately, the overall numbers of small game hunters and trappers continue to decline (see Tables 2 and 3). The exceptions may be hunters of Canada geese and coyotes. The increase in our resident goose population has created greater hunting opportunities and renewed interest in water-

Table 2. Hunter-days for each small game species during the 1991-92 and 1992-93 seasons.

Species	1991-92	1992-93	Percent change
Cottontail Rabbit	2,474,017	2,210,784	-10.6
Ruffed Grouse	1,580,574	1,331,444	-15.8
Gray Squirrel	2,004,826	1,814,807	-9.5
Ring-necked Pheasant	1,115,902	902,308	-19.1
Woodcock	119,238	97,699	-18.1
Bobwhite Quail	13,630	3,228	-23.7
Mourning Dove	409,149	329,087	-19.6
Geese	167,342	188,303	12.5
Ducks	132,775	135,656	2.2
Snowshoe Hare	15,397	11,650	-24.3
Woodchuck	1,341,605	1,191,725	-11.2
American Crow	227,527	170,185	-25.2

fowl hunting. As we continue to expand and refine our special early and late Canada goose seasons, we hope to see an even greater interest in goose hunting here.

The number of coyote hunters and trappers have nearly doubled over the past three years. Likewise, harvests have done the same. Game Commission research indicates coyote populations are increasing and fast becoming a challenging sport — for both trappers and hunters. Coyote calling takes patience and practice.

In general, because the number of hunters has declined, so have harvests (See Tables 4 and 5). Most harvests are half what they were 10 years ago. Hunter suc-

cess rates have remained stable, though, so the declining harvests simply reflect fewer hunters afield for these game species. With continued popularity of fall turkey hunting and the longer archery seasons, more hunters are pursuing big game.

The Game Take Survey and the Furtaker Survey are vital because they allow the Game Commission to monitor hunter participation and success.

One survey note: Table 4 harvests for some species reflect a change in data collection. Prior to 1991, hunters were not asked to differentiate between birds killed in the field and those taken on commercial shooting preserves.

Table 3. Number of furbearer hunters and trappers during the 1991-92 and 1992-93 seasons.

Species	1991-92	1992-93	Percent change
Raccoon	9,921	9,992	0.7
Muskrat	4,865	4,419	9.2
Red Fox	7,827	7,019	-10.3
Gray Fox	6,613	6,263	-5.3
Opposum	3,915	3,793	-3.1
Skunk	2,264	2,208	-2.5
Mink	2,726	2,539	-6.9
Coyote ^a	12,831	13,643	6.3
Weasel	422	452	7.1

^a Combines estimates from Game Take Survey and Furtaker Survey.

Table 4. Small game harvest, by species, from 1983-84 to 1992-93.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Rabbits</u>	<u>Grouse</u>	<u>Squirrel</u>	<u>Pheasant^a</u>	<u>Woodcock</u>	<u>Quail^a</u>
1983	2,156,565	493,737	2,259,320	688,250	186,319	26,152
1984	1,939,399	475,960	2,256,311	512,301	170,296	24,984
1985	2,137,737	511,271	2,428,683	507,230	137,183	20,274
1986	2,092,910	536,553	2,833,061	471,090	165,685	37,277
1987	1,764,744	484,016	2,364,596	410,396	175,124	17,849
1988	1,930,737	523,271	2,313,153	406,796	165,590	20,568
1989	1,696,712	410,371	2,206,719	373,059	143,502	18,592
1990	1,672,360	353,647	2,044,264	412,561	50,918	41,373
1991	1,462,270	293,891	1,632,108	382,994	53,183	18,583
1992	1,488,850	254,539	1,761,285	337,347	51,246	22,819

<u>Year</u>	<u>Dove</u>	<u>Geese</u>	<u>Ducks^a</u>	<u>Snow-shoes</u>	<u>Wood-chucks</u>	<u>Crow</u>
1983	1,690,158	68,333	251,171	10,867		
1984	1,402,180	64,452	224,728	13,989		
1985	1,443,109	56,233	178,013	14,749		
1986	1,531,868	69,748	174,405	13,189		
1987	1,374,110	68,541	184,882	14,412		
1988	1,520,322	49,573	131,399	8,488		
1989	1,209,438	78,821	119,952	7,595		
1990	1,022,402	72,901	110,243	3,615	1,299,647	355,492
1991	968,421	69,127	90,383	3,579	1,304,020	257,009
1992	734,707	78,883	93,687	3,961	1,157,090	185,192

^a Estimates include harvest on shooting preserves.

Table 5. Furbearer harvests from 1983-84 to 1992-93.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Raccoon</u>	<u>Muskrat</u>	<u>Red Fox</u>	<u>Gray Fox</u>	<u>Opossum</u>
1983	449,499	575,530	88,643	64,754	339,436
1984	495,106	621,111	75,532	66,975	339,294
1985	557,989	362,074	68,074	40,476	237,493
1986	426,625	440,880	95,330	46,387	210,953
1987	443,934	346,558	74,590	56,944	217,552
1988	247,743	230,058	52,778	23,102	105,881
1989	155,761	141,577	43,525	28,818	80,660
1990	116,443	112,358	32,699	21,653	36,574
1991	130,608	156,014	28,495	30,409	37,177
1992	124,404	135,533	27,611	25,395	27,754

<u>Year</u>	<u>Skunk</u>	<u>Mink</u>	<u>Coyote^{a,b}</u>	<u>Weasel^a</u>
1983	86,769	13,089		
1984	72,050	23,627		
1985	48,847	13,932		
1986	39,064	16,008		
1987	39,632	18,513		
1988	16,371	12,914		
1989	20,409	9,669		
1990	9,298	7,053	1,810	798
1991	8,907	10,355	3,719	481
1992	7,221	9,157	4,402	343

^a No data prior to 1990.

^b Combines data from the Game Take and Furtaker Surveys.



OCTOBER BRINGS a huge moon that lights the night almost from sunset to sunrise. It's called the hunter's moon because our hunting forefathers used the bright nighttime to go after game.

The Hunter's Moon

By Eugene R. Slatick

HUNTERS HAVE the right to feel a little special when they look at October's full moon. It is, after all, the "hunter's moon." The name is not just poetic; it can be traced back centuries to northern Europe, to a time when hunting was often a matter of survival and hunters looked forward to October's full moon because its light gave them more time to pursue game after sunset.

A month earlier, many of those hunters gathered crops in the light of September's "harvest moon."

In a sense, the hunter's moon is also a harvest moon because it heralds the beginning of the principal season for harvesting

game. Many hunters, seemingly under its spell, are now eagerly looking forward to prowling the fields and forests.

The hunter's moon, like the harvest moon, is notable because it rises at nearly the same time for several days in a row. At other times of the year, the delay in moon rise can shift more than an hour from one evening to the next.

But in October the moon's path changes little. It meets the horizon at a lower angle, and the lag is only about half an hour. This gives us several nights when the light of the hunter's moon lengthens the day, and there is full moonlight almost from sunset to sunrise.

The rising hunter's moon can play tricks on our eyes. It looks larger when close to the horizon than when it's overhead. The illusion results from the eye comparing the relationship of the moon with things that seem close to it, such as trees, buildings or mountains.

The effect is enhanced when the earth's atmosphere adds a tint of color to the moon.

Actually, astronomers point out, the moon should appear slightly smaller when it first rises than when it is directly overhead because it's farther away — by about half the diameter of the earth, or nearly 4,000 miles.

Watching the hunter's moon emerge from the horizon can stir up the mystical feelings we inherited from ancient moon watchers. Many civilizations once worshipped the moon as a deity. The Greeks and Romans had a goddess of the moon; the Greeks called her Artemis, the Romans, Diana. She adds special significance to the

hunter's moon because she was also the goddess of the hunt.

Artemis was the daughter of Zeus and the twin sister of Apollo. She was devoted to hunting from the moment of birth. The first things she asked of Zeus were a tunic, hunting boots, a bow and a quiver filled with arrows. Artists portray Artemis as young, slim and supple, wearing her hair drawn back or gathered in a knot.

Artemis reveled in the hunt. Nymphs usually accompanied her to care for the hounds. She was popular among the ordinary people, who often made offerings to her.

She was not only their goddess of the hunt, but also of all wild nature. As divine gamekeeper, she protected wildlife from abuse, especially the young. She severely punished anyone who wantonly slew game.

The early Native Americans, not surprisingly, were moon watchers. Here in the East, the Indians considered the moon to be an "elder brother," a spirit whose role was to act as a nighttime sun. He supplied light and protected the Indians and animals at night while the sun returned to the earth to rest.

In the West, the Indians also regarded the moon as a deity; for some it was a male spirit and for others a female. The Indians watched the moon carefully for weather omens and other signs that could affect their everyday lives.

We don't do much moon watching nowadays. But if the sky is clear, take some time to gaze at the rising hunter's moon. It is as much a part of autumn as the changing colors of the leaves. In fact, when the hunter's moon arrives, we're about a month into fall.

We crossed the seasonal turning point, the autumnal equinox, around the time of the harvest moon. Then, the day was as long as the night. Now, the celestial clockwork carries the hunter's moon through a night that is about an hour longer than it was a month ago.

Pausing to watch this special moon can be a tonic for the spirit as we prepare for the hunting seasons.



"We Need Wildlife" is a message more people must heed if we're to ensure the future of our wild resources. The Game Commission has produced a handsome full-color cardinal patch to promote this theme. The 3-inch patch costs \$3 (plus 6% tax for residents). Order from the Commission at Dept. MS, 2001 Elmerston Ave., Harrisburg, PA 17110-9797.



AROUND MID-MORNING we spotted a flock of seven birds, and this time our flagging and calling worked. It seemed like forever, but suddenly they were on top of us.

Indian Summer Geese

By Guy L. Ridge III

PENNSYLVANIA is not particularly noted for waterfowl hunting, at least not like Delaware, Maryland, Texas and some other traditional hot spots. But don't be fooled; our state provides some outstanding duck and goose hunting.

Our resident population of Canada geese has been steadily increasing in recent years. Good shooting is available to those willing to invest the time and effort.

Most Pennsylvanians would be thrilled with a cloudless mid-October day with temperatures in the 70s, but such a forecast is devastating to die-hard waterfowlers. That

was our lot several years ago on opening day: no rain, no fog, no gusting winds. It was depressing.

Our hopeful group of five hunters had other problems to contend with, too. The Susquehanna River, swollen and raging, had washed away most of the water blinds, reducing the hunting pressure we counted on to move geese off the river. To make matters worse, corn still stood on the farm we were going to hunt and the neighboring farmer had just picked his — setting the table, as it were, for hungry geese. We were stuck with trying to lure birds into a long

grass and clover strip that separated standing cornfields.

But hope springs eternal, and in the pre-dawn darkness of the opener we carefully arranged our 60 magnum decoys and settled in to wait.

Beautiful Day

As predicted, dawn revealed a beautiful Indian summer day. The geese seemed content to sleep and bask for a while in the unseasonably warm temperatures. Finally, around 8:30, several large flocks lifted off the river and headed out to feed.

They showed no interest in our setup; they sailed over without so much as a look and headed for the recently picked cornfields.

A half-hour later we saw a flight high above the river. We figured they were migrants, about 50 strong, and they too ignored our calling and the decoys. Interestingly, the 11th bird in the formation was a snow goose, adding its "barks" to the honks of its companions.

Almost as soon as that group went out of

sight another flock appeared. This time our flagging and calling caught their attention. About 15 birds glided over us, but they were about 70 yards high. Anxious to get them within shooting range, we tried to coax them back to our spread. The birds enthusiastically answered our calls, but they wouldn't come in and they eventually drifted out of sight.

We heard little shooting. The river and surrounding fields were unusually quiet.

Around mid-morning we heard a small flock lift off the river, and in a few moments we spotted seven birds crest the distant tree line. They were about 300 yards out and slowly climbing.

We hit them with some excited calling and they turned our way and spotted our dekes. Slowly they began to close the distance. Two hundred yards. One hundred yards. When they hit 70 yards out we reduced our calling to one man.

The caller switched from double clucks and rapid honks to soft clucks and feeding gabbles. The birds seemed to cover the last 50 yards in slow motion. Finally they were

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IN FEW SPORTS does the mood swing from sheer boredom to feverish excitement in just a matter of seconds. That's how it is with close-up goose hunting.

right in front of us, hanging in mid-air, wings cupped and feet down, about 15 yards out.

Pandemonium broke loose. Startled geese feverishly backpedaled while mesmerized hunters, who had waited 10 long months for this chance, struggled to stand and shoulder their shotguns.

Volley of Shots

The lead bird broke off in front of me while the remaining six swung past my companions. A volley of shots rang out and five Cans tumbled. It was incredible. Close-up goose hunting can be intense. Perhaps my friend Jack Hirsch summed it up best when he said few other sports can go from sheer boredom to feverish excitement in a matter of seconds.

About 15 minutes later another flock came off the river. It turned in response to our pleading calls. The birds were willing to take a look, but they showed no interest in joining our "flock." We could only hope that they were in range when they passed over us. They were. The 12 birds glided past no more than 40 yards out.

All five of us went up at the same time and apparently drew down on the same bird. With what sounded to be one ear-splitting shot, the lead bird dropped. The rest of the flock banked hard and flew out of range.



By 10 o'clock the crystal blue sky was barren of birds and that's the way it stayed the rest of the day.

But the long, uneventful hours were not wasted. We got in lots of calling practice, took badly needed naps, and selected sites where we would dig our pit blinds for later in the season, after the crops were harvested.

As the day closed and we picked up the decoys, we realized that soon the winter winds would howl across the picked cornfields and drive freezing rain and snow in horizontal sheets. But for now, balmy temperatures, a gorgeous blue sky and six Canada geese made for a great opening day of goose season.

COVER PAINTING BY BOB SOPCHICK

FOR A MODEL for this painting — after searching long and hard for just the right vintage Woolrich coat — Bob built a life-size scarecrow. And as probably every dog owner can appreciate, when he set up the scarecrow in his yard, the dog barked and growled as if it was an intruder. The animosity didn't last, though. "Later," Bob says, "After I put it on a chair in my studio, the dog kept coming over and putting its head under the scarecrow's hand, wanting to be petted."

Limited edition prints of this cover, "Grandpa's Woolrich," are available from Tail Feather Press, 402 N. Main St., Spring Grove, PA 17362. The edition is limited to 750 signed and numbered prints. Image size is 15x22 1/2 inches, and the price is \$110, delivered; \$205, framed. Pennsylvania residents must add sales tax. For ordering information, call (800) 859-5555.

*When you've lived and hunted in one place
all your life, relocating can be difficult —
unless you make . . .*

A Good Move

By Dave Dufford

I'VE ALWAYS been fortunate to be able to hunt within walking distance of where I've lived, which almost always has been rural parts of Butler County. In my last few years there, my family and I rented a farmhouse near Slippery Rock and it was like a squirrel hunter's heaven.

When I got the chance to buy a house in West Sunbury, I balked a bit; the fact that we would have to move Oct. 1 meant I would have little time to learn the area before squirrels opened. I'd pretty much resigned myself to having a less than spectacular season.

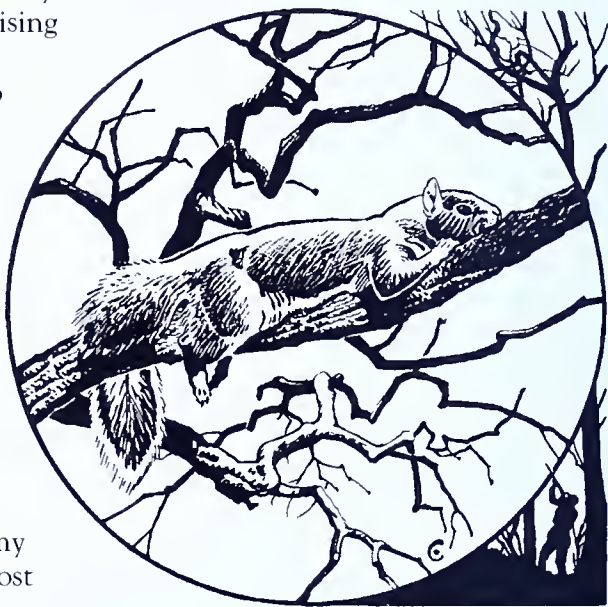
Preseason scouting trips brightened my outlook, however. I found a few promising places, and my next door neighbor Dave Desch assured me there was also some fair grouse hunting around. I had flushed a few while scouting and had even stumbled upon a flock of turkeys. I began to realize the upcoming hunting seasons might be more interesting than I'd first thought.

While in past years I'd done almost all my hunting with a flintlock for deer and a rimfire for woodchucks and squirrels, I believed it was time to add another arm to my arsenal. I figured toting a shotgun as my primary gun would help me get the most out of the small game season.

I knew it would take me time to adjust to the switch. On my few outings for grouse the year before, the first with the shotgun, I discovered that long years of hunting with a .22 had caused some terrible habits. When a bird would flush, I would simply stand there — gun at my side — and say, "There it goes." By the time it would dawn on me that I could've shot, the bird would be long gone.

When Dave invited me to go grouse hunting on opening day I gladly accepted, but I warned him that he might end up thinking something was wrong with me.

We could get out for only a few hours, and since Dave knew I liked to hunt bushytails, we hit some squirrel woods. Dave dropped a nice gray out of the treetops, and a short time later he flushed a grouse. Dave couldn't shoot, but the bird gave me



a clear view of it for a good 30 or 40 yards. When the bird was gone, I was still pointing, saying, "There it goes." Dave never said a word.

Since that day I've stuck with the shotgun for most of my squirrel hunting, trying to be ready for grouse I might flush. I haven't been able to shoot at one yet, but at least now I'm remembering to try. I'm also finding out that hunting squirrels with a shotgun is no sure thing.

I use a full-choked 12-gauge Stevens single barrel, which I bought from a friend a few years ago for \$25. It didn't fit me worth a darn, so I shortened the stock and installed a recoil pad. I also lowered the comb almost a full inch, and while I was at it, I restained and refinished the stock. It was a fun project, and the gun now looks good and comes up beautifully. When I miss a squirrel I can't blame the gun.

I got so wrapped up in squirrel hunting I almost failed to notice the opening of the regular small game and turkey seasons. While I still focused on squirrels, I began carrying some heavier loads in case I ran into turkeys.

I also began to notice the rabbits I kicked out of the fields I crossed to get to my hunting spots. The bunnies sat pretty tight, and I never took a poke at them because I didn't want to ruin the meat by hitting them at close range with a full choke and 1¼ ounces of No. 5s.

But on the first Wednesday of general small game season I left the 12-gauge behind and picked up a 20 I inherited from my father. I've owned a couple good shotguns over the years, but the Ithaca Model 37 pump is one of my favorites. The bluing is worn and the stock's finish is shot, and I don't take it out in wet weather. But when I hunt with it I can really connect.

The day was clear and sunny, and after loading up with light No. 6 loads, I began at the end of a long narrow strip that joined the main field. After about an hour the only game I'd put up had been a grouse I'd heard flush in some



I DECIDED to hunt to the top of the hill, and just as I got to the crest I spotted a flock of turkeys. They flushed like a covey of giant quail.

pinetrees near the field. The rabbits didn't seem to be in this particular cover, and I began looking around for something better.

I decided to hunt the field to the top of the hill, and just as I was making the crest, I saw movement a few yards on the other side. In the time it took to blink, I realized it was a flock of turkeys.

They flushed like a covey of giant quail. I was about yell, "There they go," but then I remembered turkey season was open. I knew I'd have to shoot quickly because my light loads would be effective only at very short range. I picked out a bird angling to my right and fired. The turkey dropped 15 feet away.

As I field-dressed the young hen, my first turkey, I knew it would always be one of my most memorable hunting moments. Dad's little 20-gauge had provided our Thanksgiving dinner. As I sat on the sun-bathed hilltop thinking

about Dad and looking at the gun and the bird, I could hear the occasional cluck as the turkeys began to reassemble.

On Saturday I took my grandniece Brandy out for her first squirrel hunt. I thought for sure I'd be able to at least get her some shooting, but for the first time that season I didn't find or even hear a squirrel. Brandy got to see a number of deer, though.

The next week Brandy's father, John Gordon, called to ask if I wanted to go rabbit hunting. I said yes, but I told him because it was raining I wouldn't use my pump. When John came over he brought along a Remington 870 20-gauge for me to use.

John also brought his beagle, and she was trailing a rabbit within the first five minutes. When the rabbit circled back, John shot and missed. A minute later, it ran by me and I tumbled it.

It was the only action we had that day, although we did flush a hen pheasant from the corner of one field and heard a cockbird cackling in another.

The next morning I headed out again, by myself. The rain had stopped during the night, and I hoped the leaves would be wet enough for me to sneak up on a grouse. I managed to put one up not far from the game lands near my place, but it was in some pines and I never saw it.

Half an hour later I was working my way through some grapevines along the top of a hill and I saw a squirrel running along the ground. My three shots put it in high gear and left me feeling I shouldn't be allowed to hunt squirrels with a shotgun.

From there I hunted down the hill, making a short side trip along the way to explore a new area. The pheasant we flushed the day before prompted me to hunt the edge of a field, so I

I COULDN'T believe my luck when the ringneck ran into the open lane. He hit the sky in a burst of colors.

began walking a lane that ran around the outside. As I reached the lower end of the field, I heard three fast shots not far away. I stopped for a moment, watching and waiting.

I'd taken just a few steps when I spotted a ringneck no more than 20 feet away. He was between the weeds and the edge of the woods; it looked as though he didn't want to come out into the open. I watched him for half a minute, praying he wouldn't run into the woods.

Waiting seemed to get me nowhere, so I started toward him at a fast pace. I couldn't believe my luck when he ran into the open lane and then hit the sky in a burst of colors. I followed him with the 870 as he flew out across the field. When I felt the range and lead were just right, I pulled the trigger and collected the first ringneck I've taken in 22 years. It was almost as good as getting the turkey.

As I sat down to collect my thoughts about the season, I realized there were still several weeks of small game remaining before it would be time to hunt deer with my flintlock. Then, for the first time, it dawned on me that I was having one of my best hunting seasons. And to think I hadn't wanted to move here.



Taking It To The Limit — York County Style

Once famous for its pheasant hunting, this southeastern county still offers excellent gray squirrel opportunities.

By Bob D'Angelo

FILTERING THROUGH the tall oaks, the sun promised a great day for squirrel hunting. It was the second Saturday of the season, and I was hunting a favorite hardwood grove surrounded by southern York County farmland. While I watched the sun come up, I thought back to opening day in this same woodlot.

The day had started out poorly and had gotten worse. It was raining when I got up, and after I'd parked the truck and trudged across a large soybean field in the dark, I realized I didn't have my keys. I went back to the truck, but they weren't there. I tried

to retrace my path across the field, crawling on my hands and knees. Luckily, I found them after going only about 10 feet.

Relieved, I got on with my hunt. The rain never let up, though, and eventually I called it quits.

I knew this second Saturday was going to be much better. It wasn't long before the swish of a limb in a large oak at the edge of the woods caught my attention. A squirrel raced down the trunk and headed for a huge hickory 20 yards away. I shouldered my Winchester 1300 shotgun, clicked off the safety, and sent the squirrel cartwheeling. The first of the day, and of the season, went into the game bag.

I moved deeper into the woods and took a stand at a large oak tree uprooted by a storm several years back. The spot usually produces, probably because of the many large branches and old logs on the ground. Squirrels like to use these fallen logs as travel lanes.

The location offered another advantage in that the oak grove juts into crop fields. That year the patch of trees, about 75 yards wide, was bordered by cut corn on one

SQUIRRELS MAY BE our most underutilized game species. Their numbers are consistently good across the state, and squirrel populations have remained healthy in farmland habitats.



side and soybeans on the other. It provided the squirrels with both mast and grain.

York County was famous at one time for its rabbit and pheasant hunting. Although the pheasant's heyday has passed — at least for now — the mix of farmland and woodlots provides excellent food and cover for a variety of wildlife and makes for unsurpassed squirrel hunting.

York County woodlot squirrel hunting does mean that sportsmen should leave their rimfires at home. High human densities there, and in other heavily agricultural areas as well, limit the safe firearms choice to shotguns.

A streak of gray caught my eye and I watched a large squirrel jump on a red oak 40 yards away. It was a long shot, but pattern tests I'd performed with this load through a full-choke tube indicated I could make a clean kill at that range.

But pattern testing can't help bad shooting. I fired, but the squirrel bolted from the tree and only picked up more speed as I missed it a second time. I no sooner put two more shells in the gun when another squirrel angled toward me on a fallen log. That one I got.

From Behind

The third came up from behind me, digging through the leaves for acorns. It was an easy shot. While dressing this gray, another squirrel ran along the same downed tree where I'd killed the second one only 15 minutes earlier. I quickly downed it.

As the minutes ticked by I watched several squirrels race through the treetops and others scamper on the ground, all too far away. I heard even more squirrels that I couldn't see — they seemed to be everywhere. The thought of taking a limit crept into my mind, and even though I don't attach much importance to it, it's nice to shoot six squirrels now and then.

The sound of acorns hitting the ground got my attention, and high in an oak I saw



A GOOD PLACE to begin looking for gray squirrels is woodlots surrounded by fields. These areas provide both food and cover for grays. Hunters pursuing squirrels in farmland areas should stick to using shotguns.

the squirrel just as it moved around from the back of the tree. It was a long, high shot, but the load of No. 6s brought the animal to the ground. At that point I'd been hunting only two hours and I had five squirrels already — four in just the past hour. I'd never experienced such fast action before.

Then the pace began to slow, but just as I was thinking about changing strategy for the afternoon, I saw a flash of gray at the far end of the blowdown I was using as a stand. A large bushytail jumped on the downed oak and started moving steadily toward me. I placed the bead of the shotgun slightly ahead of the moving target and squeezed the trigger.

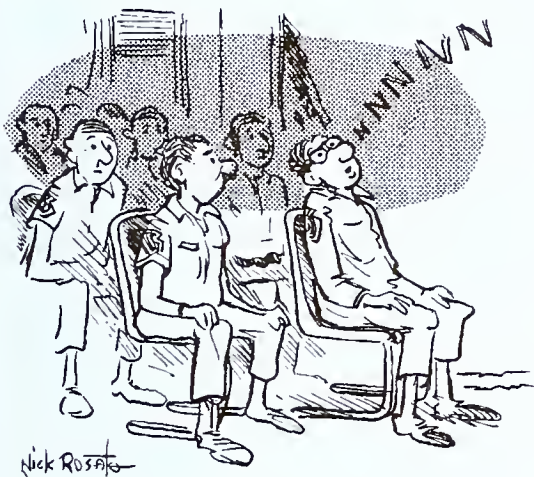
At the shot, my sixth and last squirrel fell to the ground. I picked it up and glanced at my watch. It was only 10 o'clock. In just three hours I had seen 17 squirrels.

After savoring the beautiful October morning for a few moments, and reflecting on my good fortune, I gathered my squirrels, shouldered the shotgun, and trudged through the woods toward my truck.



Warm It Up

Research in New York has shown that putting as little as 5 percent of a farm's available acreage into permanent warm season grasses can greatly increase wintering pheasant populations. We still have some pockets of wild pheasants here, but only where suitable habitat has been created or left alone. If you want to make a difference on your property, contact your local conservation district or Game Commission region office to request information on warm season grasses. It may help bring back the "good old days" of pheasant hunting. — LMO Keith P. Sanford, Mifflinville.



Eyeballing a Nap

TRAINING SCHOOL — After a long day of visiting taxidermists and other special permittees, we returned for our evening class. Halfway through, a classmate leaned over and asked if I had picked up any glass eyes during the day. I asked what he'd want with them, and he said he was having trouble staying awake. He wanted to stick them behind his glasses so he could take a nap. — Trainee Jeffrey G. Mock, Harrisburg.

Early Warning

TIOGA COUNTY — While we normally wait until spring to start telling people to leave wild animals alone, a recent case deserves attention. Last year a woman was bitten by a small raccoon that she'd picked up. It tested positive for rabies and the woman had to undergo the lengthy treatment. This year the woman picked up a weasel, which also bit her. Luckily, it tested negative. Remember, it's okay to look at wild animals, but don't touch them. — WCO Franklin Bernstein, Knoxville.

Remove Food

LANCASTER COUNTY — If you're among those who enjoy watching wildlife at feeders outside your homes or cabins, remember that all supplemental food must be removed around the area 30 days before the opening of any season you want to hunt. Residue from salt or mineral blocks must also be removed. Contact your Commission region office for more information. — WCO Linda L. Swank, Quarryville.

Ain't So

WYOMING COUNTY — While many people think poachers kill animals because they need the meat, more often they do it because they're just greedy. Trophy white-tails are killed at night, before the season, so poachers can brag about their prowess. Deer are jacklighted and left lay. One poacher in my district fired into a herd of deer, two of which were left in the field and a third later died of starvation resulting from a shot-off jaw. Nighttime poachers also endanger the public with stray bullets. Don't believe these people are just trying to put food on the table. — WCO William Wasserman, Tunkhannock.

What's In a Name?

TRAINING SCHOOL — Since this is my first Field Note, I wanted to shortstop any misconceptions people might have when they run into me in the field or at a hunter safety course. Despite my last name, I am not, nor will I ever be, without compassion. — Trainee Roger A. Hartless, Harrisburg.



Outfoxed

WESTMORELAND COUNTY — A woman recently called to say that while she was working in her horse stable, an animal she first thought was a cat ran out from behind some furniture into a walk-in closet. She began to second-guess her first impression and, sure enough, when she checked the closet she found a red fox. I'd like to know how it got past three dogs that have free run of the stables. — WCO R.D. Hixson, Ligonier.

No Mark Spitz

I've seen groundhogs do some unusual things, such as running up trees, scampering about during February snowstorms, and prowling at all hours of the night. But last summer, while my wife and I were canoeing on Loyalhanna Lake, we saw what turned out to be a half-grown woodchuck swimming toward the opposite shore about 250 yards away. — Information & Education Supervisor Barry K. Moore, Saltsburg.

Don't Light 'Em Up

BRADFORD COUNTY — When spotlighting this fall, please be courteous when casting your light. Each year we get a lot of complaints from homeowners whose houses are swept with spotlights. Often the spotlighters do it accidentally, but sometimes it's just thoughtlessness. It's very annoying to have a 300,000 candlepower light traverse your livingroom. Remember, too, that you must stop spotlighting by 11 p.m. — WCO Richard P. Larned, Warren Center.

Show and Tell

GREENE COUNTY — I was driving my mother back from ceramics class, and she commented on how many roadkilled deer she'd seen. She wondered whether people tried to hit them, but I said the collisions cause too much damage for anyone to do it on purpose. Having hit several on patrol, I explained how they can seem to come out of nowhere. Just then a deer jumped in front of us, and I hit it. The animal went up over the hood and the windshield — right in front of Mom. Now I think she understands what I was trying to tell her. — WCO Rodney S. Ansell, Rogersville.

Where Does It Go?

WASHINGTON COUNTY — This year the agency got more than \$6 million in Pittman-Robertson funds, derived from self-imposed taxes on sporting goods, ammunition and the like. States use the money for land acquisition, habitat improvement and research projects. When the anti-hunters unjustly accuse us of wiping out wildlife populations, ask them how much of the money they collect goes to wildlife. I'm willing to bet the vast majority of it goes to campaigns directed at legal and ethical hunting and trapping. — WCO Thomas A. Fazi, Slovan.

The Fast Track

TRAINING SCHOOL — It will take us nine months to graduate from the school, and in that time we will have received more than 125 credit hours of instruction. It took me four years to get that many credits at Penn State. The agency is committed to making us the best possible stewards of the state's wildlife resources. — Trainee Matthew D. Belding, Harrisburg.



Minstrel

LYCOMING COUNTY — My neighboring officers and I handle a lot of bears, and we believe we know the effects of the drugs we tranquilize them with. As I released a 300-pound male, I told a group of bystanders that most wake up in 30 minutes to an hour. The bear slept on for two hours until a Mrs. O'Brien brought out a ukulele and began playing. Five minutes later the bear woke up and wandered off. I wonder what she charges by the hour. — WCO Terry D. Wills, Williamsport.

Wham!

We're required to take an unarmed self-defense course, and I chose karate. I had an evening class the same day I'd spent learning our new game lands planning system — Wildlife Habitat Assessment and Management Systems (WHAMS). By the end of the day I felt like I'd participated in WHAMS I and WHAMS II. — LMO Stephen J. Schweitzer, Dallas.

Span Worm Effect

McKEAN COUNTY — We've been spared the gypsy moth because we don't have a large oak component to our forests, but an outbreak of elm span worm has been just as bad. Summer visitors found defoliated forests, and hunters would be wise to see what effect it had on the areas they hunt. Animals tend to modify their patterns when major habitat changes occur. — WCO John P. Dzemyan, Smethport.

They're Everywhere

BRADFORD COUNTY — My wife and I were traveling through New Hampshire, and we had stopped to get something to eat when I saw a young man throw trash into a river. Just then Sgt. John Sampson, a wildlife officer, drove by. I reported what I'd just seen, and as he took down the information we chatted about our jobs. It seems they have the same problems we do. The moral of the story is don't break the law because you never know where we'll be. — WCO William A. Bower, Troy.

A Shame

ERIE COUNTY — It's a shame that animal rightists have ruined the fur market. Now that no one is trapping, furbearers are causing increasing problems. I know of two farmers who had to trap and destroy more than 45 raccoons that were causing crop damage. If the animals had been harvested by furtakers during trapping season, the pelts and meat could've been used instead of wasted. — WCO Wayne Lugaila, Waterford.

Simple

WESTMORELAND COUNTY — Recently I served as a resident instructor for the trainee class in Harrisburg. At a break in their dendrology course, ably taught by foresters Dave Henry and Thomas Lewis, one of the trainees explained his own tree classification system. "It's a lot simpler," he said. "I class mine into three distinct groups: fruit trees, firewood trees and 'other.'" — WCO Joseph V. Stefko, Greensburg.

Tiring Teachers

I'd like to thank Lehigh County Parks Director Tony Mazziotta for his cooperation in conducting a tour of SGL 205 during a teachers' awareness workshop. WCO David Mitchell and I explained how we manage game lands for game and nongame. The walk was good for everyone, and if we started out a bit fast (causing some huffing and puffing) the finish was all downhill. — LMO Bruce C. Metz, Spinnerstown.

Benefits

More and more health conscious people are discovering the benefits of state game lands. I see an increasing number of folks walking, biking and jogging on these lands. I hope through these activities more people become aware of what the Game Commission is all about, and that the game lands are for everyone — not just hunters and trappers. — LMO Pat Anderson, Titusville.



Snapping Soup

CRAWFORD COUNTY — We had a wild game tasting table at the county's Youth Field Day, and WCO Dave Myers, Carl Spring and I were taking five big snapping turtles to Pymatuning Sportsmen's Club in preparation. Jokingly, I said what a good Field Note it would make if one of them got out, and seconds later Dave yelled as a snapper poked its head out of the can we had them in. Carl was busy making a mad scramble to get out of the way. — WCO Mark Allegro, Meadville.



In the Muck

FOREST COUNTY — Back in June Deputy James Lariviere was called to rescue a goose tangled in fishing line. He rented a canoe to get at the bird, but it eluded him for quite some time. Just when it looked like he had the goose, the canoe began to tip. Someone had told the deputy that the pond was deep, so Lariviere quickly dove out of the canoe — landing in two feet of water and three feet of mud. The goose got out of the water then (obviously knowing it was no match for our deputy), and Lariviere was able to free it. — WCO Alfred N. Pedder, Marienville.

Identity Crisis

TRAINING SCHOOL — As part of my training, I asked visitors at Middle Creek Wildlife Management Area two questions: Did they know who operates the area, and did they know where that agency gets its funding. Out of 10 people, only one knew that Middle Creek is run by the Game Commission and that the agency is funded primarily from hunting and trapping license monies. Most people thought "the government" operated Middle Creek with tax dollars. We need to reach out to the nonhunting public and show them what hunters, and the Game Commission, do for wildlife. — Trainee Mike Doherty, Harrisburg.



A Hazard

BUTLER COUNTY — Bob Johanson, Deputy Jeff Crane and I were playing golf in Saxonburg, and on the fifth hole Bob sliced one into the woods. When we got to the ball, two fox squirrels were beside it, and when Bob went over, one of the squirrels took it and ran up a tree. The animal began to chew on the ball as if it were an acorn, but it must not have tasted very good. The squirrel dropped the ball, allowing Bob to play on. — WCO Dale E. Hockenberry, East Butler.

Dining In

LYCOMING COUNTY — Even the agency has nuisance wildlife problems. Recently a bear tore through the fences at the Northcentral Game Farm and killed at least 27 ringnecks. Although it's good they weren't the Sichuan birds raised for the pheasant restoration project, they were valuable just the same. We caught the bear the next night and relocated it. I hope it stays put. — WCO Dan Marks, Montoursville.

Taking A Breather

BLAIR COUNTY — Before deputies are commissioned, they must receive one week of training at the Ross Leffler School of Conservation. The father of one young deputy trainee requested that the training be extended because it had been so peaceful around the house. — WCO Don Martin, Hollidaysburg.

Problem Arrows

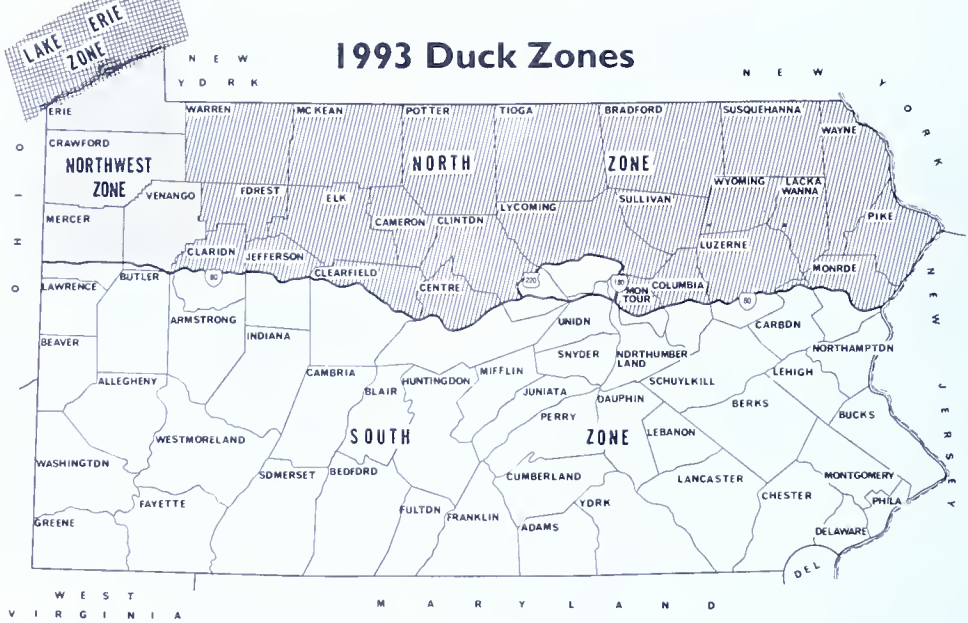
MERCER COUNTY — Several area farmers are concerned about arrows being left in their fields. Some have showed me aluminum shafts with broadheads they've found in baled hay or forage. In some cases the shafts had been chopped into pieces small enough for a cow to eat. Ingesting broadheads and bits of aluminum can easily kill valuable animals. These farmers aren't against bowhunting; they just want archers to confine their shooting to the woods and not into crop fields. — WCO Jim Donatelli, Mercer.

Tree Stand Cautions

TRAINING SCHOOL — Many people aren't sure what tree stands they can legally use on game lands. Tree stands may not be permanent, and they may not damage the tree in any way. Holes, cuts or scrapes through the bark make a tree more susceptible to disease and infection. The living, inner bark also transports the tree's food, and bark damage could impair food delivery. Any part of the stand that touches the bark should be rubber-coated; never drive anything into the wood. — Trainee Christopher B. Grudi, Harrisburg.

Tractor-Proof Fencing

BEAVER COUNTY — Federal Aid Supervisor Matt Hough and I put in a deer deterrent fence at the Buchholz Orchard. Mr. Buchholz was pleased with the results, saying that aside from reducing much of his crop damage it was good for other things, too. It seems a tractor had gotten away from one of his employees and rolled down the hill into the new fence. The fence stopped the tractor and neither was worse for wear. They did learn that it's necessary to turn off the electricity before attempting to untangle a tractor from a fence. — WCO D.C. Carney, Baden.



1993-94 Pennsylvania Waterfowl Seasons

THE BIG CHANGE waterfowlers will see this year is a 50 percent reduction in the Crawford County goose season. The 35-day season is split into two parts, one in October and one in November/December.

A serious decline in the Southern James Bay goose population caused the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service to halve the season throughout the Atlantic and Mississippi flyways. Canadian wildlife officials took

similar steps to halt the precipitous drop in goose numbers.

The restrictions imposed last year on goose hunting statewide continue. Seasons remain short, and bag limits are staggered through the year.

For a detailed look at waterfowl hunting throughout the state, the waterfowl section of the "1993 Season Forecast" begins on page 6.

DUCK ZONES — Ducks, sea ducks, coots and mergansers

Lake Erie Zone

Lake Erie, Presque Isle and the area within 150 yards of the shoreline of Lake Erie.

Northwest zone

The area bounded on the north by the Lake Erie Zone and including all of Erie and Crawford counties and all of Mercer and Venango counties north of Interstate 80.

North Zone

The area east of the Northwest Zone and north of Interstate 80 to Route 220, north of Route 220 from Interstate 80 to Interstate 180, north and east of Interstate 180 from Route 220 to Interstate 80, and north of Interstate 80 from Interstate 180 to the Delaware River.

South Zone

All of Pennsylvania not in the Lake Erie, Northwest and North Zones.

Conservation News

CANADA GOOSE ZONES

North Zone (including all of Venango County; see exceptions below)

That portion of the state north of Interstate 80 from the Ohio border to Route 220, north of Route 220 from Interstate 80 to Interstate 180, north and east of Interstate 180 from Route 220 to Interstate 80, and north of Interstate 80 from Interstate 180 to the Delaware River.

South Zone (see exception for Butler County below)

All of Pennsylvania not in the North Zone

OPEN SEASONS — Ducks, sea ducks, coots and mergansers

Lake Erie Zone

Nov. 8-27 and Dec. 16-25

Northwest Zone

Oct. 11-16 and Nov. 6-29

North Zone

Oct. 9-23 and Nov. 6-20

South Zone

Oct. 18-23 and Nov. 25 – Dec. 18

OPEN SEASONS & BAG LIMITS — Canada geese

North Zone

Oct. 9-16; 1 goose daily bag; 2 in possession

Oct. 18 – Dec. 18; 2 goose daily bag; 4 in possession

South Zone

Oct. 18-25; 1 goose daily bag; 2 in possession

Nov. 17 – Dec. 31; 2 goose daily bag; 4 in possession

Jan. 1-17; 3 goose daily bag; 6 in possession

EXCEPTIONS

Erie, Mercer and Butler counties

Oct. 9-16; 1 goose daily bag; 2 in possession

Nov. 15 – Jan. 15; 2 goose daily bag; 4 in possession

Crawford County

Oct. 9-16; 1 goose daily bag; 2 in possession

Nov. 6 – Dec. 2; 1 goose daily bag; 2 in possession

OPEN SEASONS — Atlantic brant, and snow geese

ATLANTIC BRANT: Nov. 1-30

SNOW & BLUE GEESE: Oct. 18 – Jan. 31

NO OPEN SEASON: all swans and harlequin and canvasback ducks

BAG LIMITS — species other than Canada geese

DUCKS: 3 daily, 6 in possession; daily limit may not include more than 1 hen mallard, 1 black duck, 1 pintail, 1 mottled duck, 1 fulvous tree duck, 2 wood ducks, 2 redheads; possession limit may not include more than: 2 hen mallards, 2 black ducks, 2 pintails, 2 mottled ducks, 2 fulvous tree ducks, 4 wood ducks, 4 redheads.

ATLANTIC BRANT: 2 daily, 4 in possession.

COOTS: 15 daily, 30 in possession.

MERGANSERS: 5 daily, 10 in possession; not more than 1 hooded merganser daily, 2 in possession.

SNOW GEESE: 5 daily, 10 in possession, combined species.

(continued next page)

Pymatuning and Middle Creek Management areas

Pymatuning Wildlife Management Area shooting dates: Oct. 9-16 and Nov. 6 – Dec. 1.

Middle Creek Wildlife Management Area shooting dates: Oct. 18-25 and Nov. 18–Jan. 17.

Shooting hours for waterfowl and migratory game birds

WATERFOWL: One-half hour before sunrise to sunset.

Exceptions:

1. Controlled shooting sections of Pymatuning Wildlife Management Area: one-half hour before sunrise to 12:30 p.m. on Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays.
2. Controlled shooting section of Middle Creek Wildlife Management Area: one-half hour before sunrise to 1:30 p.m. on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays.

DOVES: Noon to sunset, first season; one-half hour before sunrise to sunset, second season.

WOODCOCK, RAILS AND GALLINULES: one-half hour before sunrise to sunset.

(Also consult the 1993-94 *Pennsylvania Digest of Hunting and Trapping Regulations* for shooting hours.)

1993 MIGRATORY BIRD SEASONS

Species	Open	Close	Daily Limit	Field Possession
Doves (first season)	Sept. 1	Oct. 9	12	24
Doves (second season)	Oct. 30	Nov. 27	12	24
Woodcock	Oct. 23	Nov. 6	3	6
Rails (Sora and Virginia)*	Sept. 1	Nov. 6	25**	25**
Moorhens, Gallinules	Sept. 1	Nov. 6	15	30
Common Snipe (Wilson's)	Oct. 23	Nov. 27	8	16

* No open seasons on other rails.

** Singly or aggregate combinations.

Late Resident Canada Goose Season

The Pennsylvania Game Commission administers a special hunt for resident Canada geese under federal guidelines. Following is a brief outline of this season; sportspeople must have a special, free permit to participate in the hunts. Contact the Commission's Bureau of Wildlife Management regarding the permits and specific season guidelines.

Jan. 20 – Feb. 5 on and within five miles of certain portions of the Susquehanna, west branch of the Susquehanna, and Juniata rivers. Daily bag limit is **five geese**, 10 in possession.

PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES who require special assistance at Game Commission public functions should contact the telephone number listed with the announcement, the appropriate region office or the Harrisburg headquarters. Toll-free numbers for each region are listed in every issue of *Game News*; the Harrisburg number is (717) 787-4250.

Fluorescent orange requirements begin with squirrel, grouse seasons

Safety regulations passed last year require all hunters to wear at least 250 square inches of fluorescent orange on the head, chest and back combined. The orange must be visible for 360 degrees. Waterfowlers and dove and crow hunters are exempt, as are bowhunters until the portion of archery season that overlaps general small game season.

Archery deer season starts Oct. 2. Squirrel and grouse open Oct. 16, followed on Oct. 23 by woodcock.

The general small game and turkey seasons begin Oct. 30, and from that date through the remainder of archery deer season all bowhunters are required to wear a minimum of 250 square inches of fluorescent orange.

Tyler, Ridley Creek hunt information

Hunts to control deer populations will be held at Tyler State Park in Bucks County on Jan. 4 and Jan. 19, and at Ridley Creek State Park in Delaware County on Jan. 5 and Jan. 20.

Hunters participating in the antlerless-only hunts must have a permit issued by the state park in addition to a valid Pennsylvania hunting license and antlerless license for the county in which the park is located.

Tyler State Park permits 125 hunters on the property each day of the special hunt; Ridley allows 200. Only shotguns with 00 buckshot are permissible at either park. Hunting hours at both parks are 7 a.m. to 2:45 p.m.

For more information and for permits, contact Tyler State Park, DER, Newtown, PA 18940, or Ridley Creek State Park, DER, Sycamore Mills Road, Media, PA 19603.

Izaak Walton develops new hunter's pledge

The Izaak Walton League, with help from a number of governmental and private organizations, formulated a hunter's pledge which "shows that we hunters are serious about cleaning up hunting," says league director Maitland Sharpe.

The pledge includes: Respect the environment and wildlife; respect property and landowners; show consideration for nonhunters; hunt safely;

know and obey the law; support wildlife and habitat conservation; pass on an ethical hunting tradition; strive to improve outdoorskills and understanding of wildlife; and hunt only with ethical hunters.

For information concerning wallet cards and brochures containing the pledge, write IWLA Hunter's Pledge, 1401 Wilson Blvd., Level B, Arlington, VA 22209-2318.

NRA offers free 'sportsman's packet'

The National Rifle Association has produced a free "sportsman's packet" that includes brochures designed to help hunters improve the sport.

Four brochures come with the packet: Hunting and Wildlife Management, Responsible Hunting, Landowner Relations, and Firearm Safety

and the Hunter. In addition, materials include the NRA Hunter-Landowner Permission Booklet. The booklet features tear-out permission slips with copies for both landowner and hunter.

The free packet, item number HI3N8322, is available by calling NRA Sales at (800) 336-7402.

Sipple, Littwin grab PGC pistol crowns

Deputy William Sipple of Centre County finished at the top of the heap at the annual PGC Revolver Championships at Scotia Range Aug. 29. Sipple fired a 489-25X to capture the win among deputies. Skip Littwin of the Harrisburg office notched a 487-25X to best the WCOs.

Steve Bernardi, Chester County, took second in the WCO category just four Xs behind Littwin. WCO George Mock came in third with a 483-19X.

Among deputies, William Shaw of Perry County was second with a 486-25X, and Montgomery County's Richard Endy was third with a 480-18X.

The four-man team title went to

the squad of Mark Crowder, Jr., Norman Carr, Jr., and Anthony and Richard Carbaugh. The Fulton County team won with an 1853-54X.

The Bradford County squad of Richard Larnerd, Frederick Wheaton, Edward Eccker and Steven Hall finished second with an 1850-43X. Greene County's Paul Iams, Ronald Kerr, William Vanata and Daniel Adams were third with an 1847-54X.

In two-man team competition, Robert Dietz and Endy paired up for a 951-35X and the title. Littwin and Gary Packard were second with a 942-43X, and Mock and William Coder took third with a 935-38X.

Wings & Wildlife: Pittsburgh Aviary hosts art show

More than 40 top wildlife artists will show their works at the Pittsburgh Aviary Nov. 6-7. The aviary itself features art in the form of rare and exotic birds housed in large free-flight enclosures.

The Wings and Wildlife Show, in its 11th year, brings artists such as

Tom Hirata, Bruce Langton and Bernard Scott to Pittsburgh, in addition to a number of other painters, jewelers and carvers.

The show runs 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. both days. The aviary does charge its regular admission price for the show. For more information, call (412) 323-7235.

SPORT essay contest underway for '94

The Commission's SPORT Essay Contest is open to hunting-age youths across the state. This year's theme is "Respect for my sport — What it means to me and how it affects others."

The contest awards winners in senior (ages 16 to 18) and junior (12 to 15) categories. It is open to Pennsylvania residents who have completed a hunter-trapper education course and

possess a current hunting or furtaker license.

This contest's senior winner will receive a Savage Arms .270 rifle, and the junior winner will get a Savage .22 Hornet/20-gauge.

For complete contest rules, write the Commission in care of SPORT Essay Contest, 2001 Elmerton Ave., Harrisburg, PA 17110-9797.

River conference focuses on Delaware

The Pennsylvania Alliance for Environmental Education will host a four-day conference Nov. 11-14 in Shawnee on Delaware.

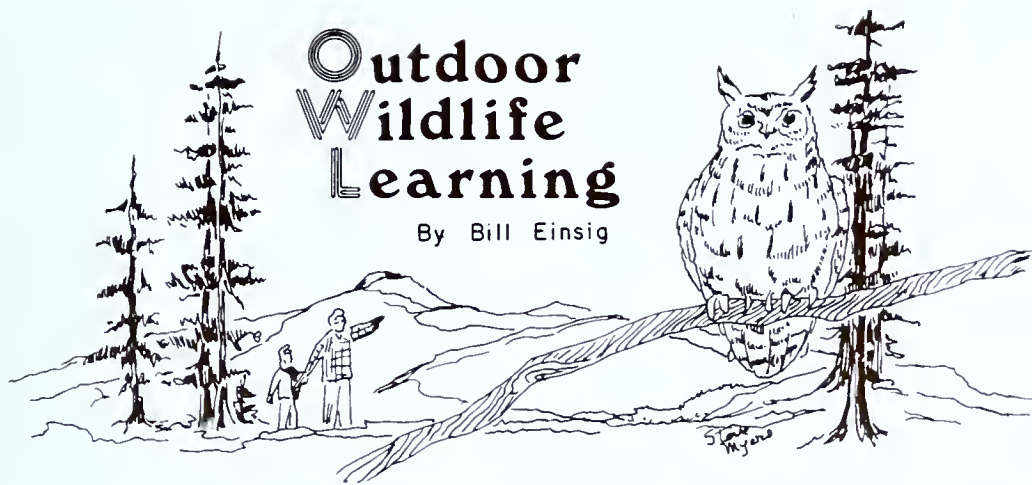
The theme is "Reflections of the River," and it will feature a variety of speakers, workshops and field projects designed to expose people to current

issues, topics and curricula relating to environmental education. Dr. William B. Stapp from the University of Michigan is the keynote speaker.

In addition to the workshops, Pete Seeger, and Kim and Reggie Harris will perform. For more information, call (717) 629-3061.

Outdoor Wildlife Learning

By Bill Einsig



Deer Weights

Dear Mr. OWL,

Does the Game Commission have any numbers that prove mature deer from some counties are heavier than deer of the same age in other counties? And if so, does this have any management significance? — E.N., York.

Dear E.N.,

Some counties do appear to have larger mature deer than other counties. Pennsylvania's wide diversity of habitat, deer herd sizes, hunting pressure and land use patterns — as well as the simple laws of chance — practically assure there will be a difference, of some degree, in the size of deer across the state.

Conventional wisdom holds that white-tailed deer from counties with lots of agriculture will be bigger simply because they benefit from higher quantities of better quality food than deer in primarily forested counties.

But there is more to this question than this answer implies. The keywords are "numbers," "prove" and "mature." Each deserves a bit of explanation.

In this age of computerized information, it seems logical that a biologist could call up a database with compilations of weights

for all whitetails taken throughout the state and then rank the counties with the largest deer. But while the technology exists, the mechanism for collecting the information does not.

At one time, hunters were asked to enter the weight of deer they had taken on the Deer Harvest Report Card supplied with the hunting license. The typical Pennsylvania deer hunter field-dresses, transports and butchers the animal without it being weighed. Some hunters do weigh their deer, but most just guess.

The figures that came in on the harvest report cards might have reflected field-dressed weights, hog-dressed weights or estimated live weights. In most instances, nobody knew which. The weight may have been taken an hour or two after the deer was shot or after one or two days of hanging and drying.

The other problem was, and is, only about 50 percent of successful hunters actually complete the legal obligation of filling out the card, which is odd because it takes only a minute to fill out and doesn't need postage. The Commission stopped asking for deer weights in 1981.

Commission biologists also once oper-

ated deer check stations where successful hunters could voluntarily stop and have their deer examined. At those check stations, biologists collected data on age, antler development, weight and other characteristics.

But the location of the check stations skewed the data because some counties were under-reported. The stations were placed on highways used by hunters returning from areas of heavy hunting pressure. The goal was to collect information from as many deer as possible, not necessarily deer from every county.

I examined a composite report of deer weights collected at check stations for the 1976, '77 and '78 seasons. The report shows that 3,161 bucks were inspected and weighed during those three years. Three counties — Lancaster, Lebanon and Washington — are not represented at all, primarily because there was no check station convenient to hunters who'd killed deer in those counties.

The last check stations operated during the 1980 seasons. Since then, Commission personnel have been visiting meat processing shops to collect age data and other management statistics. Usually, the deer

have been butchered, and biologists work only with the deer heads; weight measurements are no longer taken.

The upshot of all this is that obtaining accurate weights for deer across the commonwealth is very difficult.

A county comparison of weights of older deer is even more difficult. The large majority of antlered deer harvested in this state are 18 months old — yearlings, in other words. From the 1976-78 data I looked at, only about 4 percent of the whitetails were mature bucks, those 4½ years of age or older.

Where's the "Proof"?

Scientists of all types are usually reluctant to use that word. Science writers, on the other hand, use it too much.

When biologists examine a set of numbers, they look for patterns and build models suggested by the data. Later, as they collect more information, they modify the models to correspond with new findings. Science is an ongoing process that avoids the finality of the word "proof."

There are, however, some patterns in the check station data from which we can identify some relationships. Again, even

Average field-dressed weights of 18-month-old bucks harvested in selected counties from 1976 through 1978.

VERY GOOD TO EXCELLENT DEER

County	Average Weight (pounds)
Crawford	116
Columbia	114
Dauphin	114
Mercer	117
Westmoreland	116

FAIR OR POOR DEER

County	Average Weight (pounds)
Cameron	94
Clearfield	99
Clinton	87
McKean	92
Pike	88

though the data is incomplete, the information does appear to support the idea that white-tailed deer of the same age are significantly larger in some counties than in others.

I chose 10 counties from the 1976-78 check station report. Five counties were known to produce very good or excellent deer, based on weight, antler size and reproduction characteristics, and five counties were known to produce fair or poor deer.

I compared the average field-dressed weights of the 18-month-old bucks harvested in those counties. The average weights of the yearlings in the better counties were as much as 20 pounds heavier than in the poorer counties. If their food supply allowed them to grow this much heavier in just 18 months, then for the next several years they should continue to gain

Have a question for Mr. OWL to answer? Send it to Dear Mr. OWL, Pennsylvania Game News, 2001 Elmerton Ave., Harrisburg, PA 17110-9797.

weight at a faster rate than deer in counties that typically produce "fair" or "poor" deer.

The essence of E. N.'s question is whether biologists have to adjust management strategies for bigger, older deer. For reasons we've discussed, there is no information that indicates some areas of Pennsylvania have higher concentrations of older, larger deer.

More importantly, deer weights, while of interest to hunters, have virtually no management value. Age structure, productivity of the females and several other factors are more useful criteria for monitoring and managing deer.

Fun Games

Lesson in Firearms

By Connie Mertz

Using the terms below, complete these statements to find out how much you know about firearms.

1. Early explorers used a firearm called the _____.
2. These early guns were loaded from the _____.
3. For the next 300 years, the _____ was the firearm used by both shooters and hunters.
4. With the invention of gun powder came the _____ which led to our modern day ammunition.
5. As the firearm was perfected, the _____ was developed which was simply a powder charge, primer and bullet.
6. Every firearm is made up of three main parts. The _____ is the wooden or synthetic part; the _____ is the long tube-like structure through which the bullet travels; and the _____ is the operating system of the firearm.

PERCUSSION CAP, BARREL, MUZZLE, MATCHLOCK, CARTRIDGE, FLINTLOCK, STOCK, ACTION

answers on p. 64

Not That Easy

“THEY” SAID it would be easy, tagging a buck during last year’s fifth week of archery season. The extra week would fall during the whitetail’s full rut, when “they” said bucks would be the most vulnerable. Ha! For the veteran archers who hunted out of our home last fall, it was some of the toughest bowhunting they’d ever experienced.

While hunting in the middle of the rut may have been new to them, it wasn’t to me. I knew what to expect because I’d hunted the rut in New York, New Jersey and West Virginia, after Pennsylvania’s fall bow season closed.

Despite the hype about proven techniques for bagging full-rut bucks, despite the reputed “goofiness” of eager-to-mate deer, I knew that getting a tag on an antler was still difficult.

My visiting fifth-week bowhunters had been accustomed to hunting bucks through the regular four-week archery season in the “usual” ways — sitting around old apple orchards, and standing in oak woods and along cornfield edges. As the season edged toward the deer’s mating time, they began adding some rut-related tactics to their repertoire.

Deer Behavior

Learning about this phase of a deer’s life cycle is one of the best things to happen to Pennsylvania bowhunters in 20 years. Now we have the chance to interpret rutting behavior, look for its signs and figure out how to use the knowledge to fill our tags. Those of us who began bowhunting in the early 1970s saw plenty of scrapes, but few of us knew how to take advantage of them.

Since then we’ve learned to watch for these patches of cleared ground. We’ve even learned the particular places in our hunting area where scrapes tend to appear. We’ve found it can be helpful to sprinkle a little doe-in-heat lure around the scrapes,



HUNTING THE RUT is far from a sure bet. As many hunters no doubt discovered last year — when the archery season was extended to coincide with the peak of the whitetail rut here — getting a buck was not simply a matter of heading afield and calling one in.

in hopes of convincing lovesick bucks there’s a female nearby. And we’ve dripped cover scents on ourselves in an effort to convince deer there aren’t any archers around.

We’ve become adept at slamming, grinding and ticking antlers together in what we hope is a virtuoso performance of mimicking a buck fight. We’ve added vocal accompaniment as well, guttural grunting from tubes that look like opaque versions of my old hair drier hose.

At times these tactics have resulted in extra hunting action, and even antlers for the wall and venison for the table. If they

Another View...

by Linda Steiner

were effective in a four-week season, they should then be even better in the new, longer season.

Last year, my archer visitors dutifully carried portable tree stands into the woods or crouched behind brush near well-doused buck scrapes. They rattled and grunted, and watched and waited, grunted and rattled, and watched and waited. Surprisingly, not much happened. A time or two they saw bucks pass, out of range. Then the hot scrapes grew cold and became covered by leaves. What could be happening?

Some of the bowhunters quit their stands and hunted on foot, more to find new scrapes than to still-hunt. What they found, and what those of us who were squirrel hunting that week saw, were bucks. But the bucks were on the move after does. In my hunting area, it was the does that were hot that week, not the scrapes.

The small game hunters kept bumping into roaming bucks, while the archers watched the squirrels. One squirrel hunter saw a buck walking with that full-rut, nose-to-the-ground, tail-at-half-mast, preoccupied gait.

The squirrel hunter wanted to see the buck close up and count the points, so he hurried across the woods flat, angling to intercept the deer. The 10-point passed within 15 yards and never noticed him, its mind on other business.

Hunting in New York the year before, I'd seen several hot scrapes go cold in full-rut. I had been excited about the scrape line I'd located along a damp creek bottom. From my climbing tree stand, I could shoot to three active scrapes, and the first evening my heart pounded the whole time.

I saw only two does, and they passed by 50 or 60 yards away. The next day brought no deer by the stand, but the does were along the road when I walked to the car. The next few days, nothing. What had happened to the buck?

Finally I saw him, crossing the road after the does, heading into posted property. By then the leaves had blown across the neglected scrapes. It was obvious they were no longer the main thing on the buck's mind,

not with the objects of his desire right in front of him.

During the peak of the rut I either see no deer or lots of deer; it's as if they're in clumps. The last day of West Virginia's fall archery season I saw one doe and, in succession, four different bucks. I was on the ground, an obvious mistake because each buck spotted me. I couldn't get a good shot at any of them.

There weren't any scrapes around, just that lone doe in heat. She was on the move, so how does a hunter hunt an attraction like that? Hunt where the deer sign is, I guess.

I almost did it right several years ago in New York when I placed my stand in an oak woods dotted with crabapples and wild apple trees. The acorns, apples, deer beds and droppings showed this was a major use area. What I hadn't counted on was a hot, dry sunny last two days of the season, atypical for mid-November.

Big Buck Followed

I didn't see a deer until quitting time on the final afternoon. Then, with my bow lowered to the ground and the time run out, half a dozen does and a small buck gathered beneath my stand. The big buck followed, stalking about and grunting. I stayed a few minutes to watch the show. I had hoped to meet the big buck during legal shooting time the next year, but he was tagged early in the state's shotgun season.

Although scrape hunting, scents, antler rattling and grunting will and should remain staples of pursuing rutting bucks, don't count on the deer responding only to those techniques. If scrapes go cold, your rattling produces only bruised knuckles, and your grunts go unanswered, it may be time to vary your tactics.

Try still-hunting and you may encounter a buck chasing a doe, and if his attention is zeroed in on her you might be able to stalk within range. Another tactic is to hunt food sources that are attracting does. When the rut's in full swing, the bucks will be where the does are — so locating females is half the battle.

Mishaps are like knives, that either serve us or cut us, as we grasp them by the blade or the handle.

— James Russell Lowell
Cambridge Thirty Years Ago
Fireside Travels, 1864

THE LAST DAY of the 1990 buck season was going well. Problems were few, it wasn't too cold, and I was feeling pretty good until Butch Crowe punched me in the face.

I'd had frequent run-ins with Butch and his four brothers. None of them had been pleasant. (You may remember Jethro Crowe from my August column.)

The worst of the bunch, Butch, came to Pennsylvania after serving a 12-year prison sentence for assault and distribution of narcotics. His rap sheet is six pages long.

My encounter with him began when Deputy Gene Gaydos got a report of people hunting without fluorescent orange on a large tract of posted woodland.

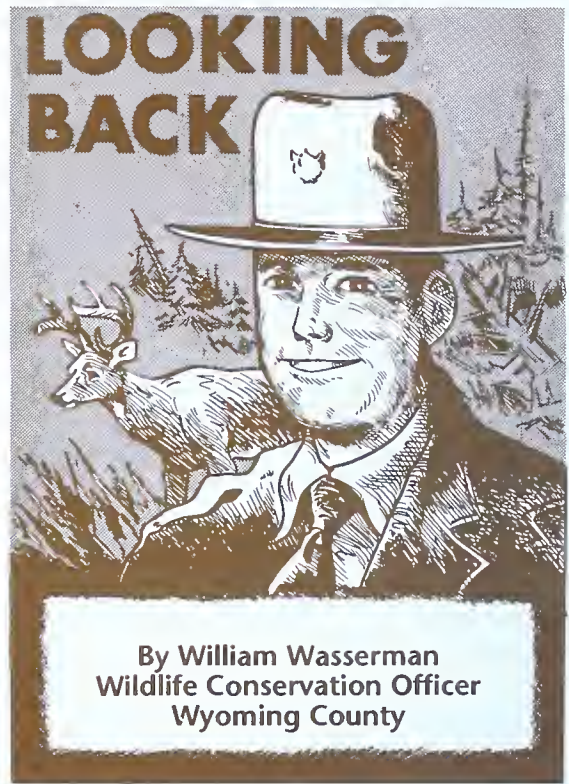
Gaydos had been directed to a narrow dirt trail where the hunters had been seen entering on an ATV. When a gunshot rattled through the trees about a hundred yards off, Gene quickly blocked the trail with his truck.

A half-hour passed and darkness was setting in when Gene first heard the low, droning hum of a small engine. It was an ATV, and it was coming fast.

He began walking toward the oncoming sound when the machine suddenly rounded a bend in front of him. Two hunters in camouflage, rifles in leather side cases, sat astride a muddy four-wheeler.

Gaydos was in full uniform. "State officer. Stop right there!" he called out, signaling the driver with his hand. But the ATV kept on.

When it was a few feet away, the



driver yelled, "I ain't stopping for you, man!" and recklessly whipped the four-wheeler around Gene.

Gene sprinted after the ATV, expecting it to be blocked by his truck. But when the driver saw the pickup, he cut into the woods. Maneuvering the ATV with the agility of slalom skier, he twisted and turned through the trees, skirting them by inches.

Gene followed until the ATV reached the hard road. Then, when it disappeared, he listened for the direction it traveled. Within seconds the motor shut off, so Gene quickly returned to his pickup. He cruised the road, scanning the yards of the modest homes along it.

Gene saw a man working on a car in his driveway and asked him about the ATV. The man pointed quickly to the next house and ducked back under the hood. Gene saw the 4-wheeler parked in the backyard.

Only a thin storm door stood between Gaydos and the people

inside. They were sitting at a table in a well-lit kitchen. An elderly woman's back was facing Gene while her male companion just stared at the bare table. A small boy sat with them.

Gene rapped on the door, but only the boy seemed to hear him. His little mouth showed surprise as he stared at the officer. Gene knocked again, louder.

"Grammy, there's a policeman at the door," the kid said, seemingly surprised that the two older folks — his grandparents — totally ignored the knocking.

Gene knocked for the third time, and the boy began tugging desperately at his grandmother's arm. "Grammy, Grammy, there's a policeman at the door. A policeman, Grammy."

Had the child not been so persistent, the woman may never have answered. "Whadaya want?" she shouted, keeping her back to the deputy.

"State Game Commission, ma'am. Would you come to the door please?"

The woman labored to her feet and walked heavily to the door. "Would you mind opening the door?" Gene asked. "I'd like to talk to you for a moment."

The door creaked partly open. "Well?" the woman glared.

"Where is the man who was driving that ATV over there?"

"That thing doesn't work, mister. It's been sitting for days."

"I don't think so. The engine is still warm and water is dripping from the frame. Somebody just parked it here."

Her eyes narrowed into slits. Gene went on. "Black hair, kinda tall, camouflage clothes."

"There's nobody like that here," she snapped, cutting him off.

Just then Gene caught a glimpse of movement over her shoulder; it was a man peeking from behind a corner. "That's him!" Gene yelled.

The black-haired man suddenly



Question

Are battery powered archery sights legal in Pennsylvania?

Answer

Yes, providing the sight does not cast a beam of light on the animal being hunted.

bolted toward Gaydos. He was wearing a faded orange sweatshirt instead of the camouflage clothing he had on earlier.

"Why are you harassing my family?" he roared at Gene. "Why don't you go arrest some poachers or something?"

Gene ignored the questions. "I'm a state conservation officer," he told him. "I want to see some identification."

The man shoved open the door and stepped outside. He was a lean 6-4 and, close up, his face had the unmistakable, haggard look of a heavy drinker. "What's this all about, anyway?" he glowered, making the question sound like a threat.

Gene replied, "You, and the person with you, were hunting without orange."

"That was my wife," the man broke in. "And I got orange on."

Ignoring this, Gene added, "And there's the problem of failing to stop . . ."

"Hey, I didn't know you were a game warden, man. I thought you were the landowner."

There's a peach of an excuse, Gene

thought. Then he asked the man's name.

"Butch Crowe."

"Do you have some identification?"

Crowe turned, briefly displaying a hunting license, then faced the deputy. "How's that?" he said.

"Hand me your hunting license," said Gene.

"I ain't showing you nothing, man. You got that? Now get off my property."

Realizing the risks of dealing with Crowe alone, Gene walked back to his truck and radioed me. I was patrolling with Deputy Richard Zika, and we responded immediately.

Butch Crowe walked over to the pickup just as Gaydos was hanging up his mike. His mood made a complete turnaround. Now he was cooperative. "You wanted to see this?" Crowe said, handing over his hunting license.

Gaydos took the license and recorded some information in a notebook. Noticing the missing big game tag, he said: "I heard a shot while I was waiting out in the woods. Did you kill a deer?"

"Yeah. I gutted it and left it in the woods. I was coming out to drop off my wife so I could load it on my quad. It's at the end of the road, where you stopped me."

"You mean where I *tried* to stop you."

"C'mon, man," Crowe whined. "I said I didn't know you were a warden. Can I get my deer now?"

Suspecting the deer might be untagged, Gene didn't want Crowe to retrieve the carcass unless an officer

was with him. "The district officer is on his way," Gene said. "After he gets here we'll help you bring it out."

"Why'd you call him?" Crowe said acidly.

"Because you've been pretty uncooperative."

"What do you mean? I gave you my license, man. Am I gonna be fined?"

Sensing one of Crowe's mood swings, Gene replied, "Probably."

"How much?"

"A hundred for no orange, \$200 for failing to stop." At that point Gene saw approaching headlights in his rearview mirror. "That's Officer Wasserman. Wait here while I talk to him."

Gene walked over to my window and began filling me in. But while he was talking, I noticed Butch Crowe hoofing it toward the back of his house. "Did you tell him he could leave?" I asked.

Gaydos cut his eyes toward Crowe, "No, I told him to stay by my truck."

I called out to Crowe, ordering him to stop, but he never broke stride.

Stepping from my vehicle, I called again, "Hold up."

Crowe began to pick up his pace. I chased after him. He jumped on his ATV, started the motor, and began revving the engine.

"Stop! Shut it off," I hollered, standing in front of the machine. Inches away, I wondered if Crowe would run over me to escape. Instead, he shut off the engine and leaped off the quad.

Then, coming toward me, he shrieked, "Who do you think you are,

Commission 800 Numbers

Within Pennsylvania, use the agency's toll-free 800 numbers to contact a wildlife conservation officer. For the Northwest Region, call (800) 533-6764; Southwest, (800) 243-8519; Northcentral, (800) 422-7551; Southcentral, (800) 422-7554; Northeast, (800) 228-0789; and Southeast (800) 228-0791. Phones will be manned around the clock during the major hunting seasons, and about 15 hours a day at other times.

telling me what to do on my property?" His fingers curled into tight fists, and he stomped toward me shouting profanities.

In an instant he was on top of me. I thrust my arms forward, jabbing two stiff palms into his chest. Reeling backwards from the blow, Crowe stumbled over his ATV, then charged me again. I stood with cocked fists.

Seeing deputies Zika and Gaydos closing in, Crowe stopped just in front of me. Without warning, his mother and his wife grabbed him from behind. They hung on to him, screaming at us like banshees.

A neighbor began to videotape the melee, casting a brilliant light on the scene. Butch Crowe bellowed, "Shut that thing off!" and the light immediately went dead.

Suddenly Crowe's father (who earlier had been sitting at the kitchen table) hobbled from the house. He was wielding a stout cane, shouting he would bash our brains out.

My attention was momentarily drawn to him, and Crowe quickly lashed out, striking me in the face with his fist. Fortunately I saw it coming, dodged, and caught only a glancing blow.

Crowe's wife braced herself in front of him, his elderly mother and father behind, making it impossible to constrain him without injuring them. I radioed for backup.

The piercing wail of police sirens caused the Crowes to finally realize how serious the situation had become. I could see their shoulders sag as the sirens approached.

Soon we saw the pulsating flash of police vehicles. Their red lights burst through the darkness in great, blinding strokes. Distraught and confused, the Crowes began to mill about submissively.

Three state police cars screamed to a halt, and troopers Tom Sheridan, Mark Lavelle and John Suhanich got

out of their cars. Butch Crowe offered no resistance as he was placed in a patrol car and whisked off to the police barracks in Tunkhannock.

Trooper Sheridan and I prepared criminal felony assault and misdemeanor charges against Crowe. We also included charges of resisting inspection and failure to wear fluorescent orange clothing while deer hunting.

District Justice Patricia A. Robinson drove to the barracks that night and arraigned Crowe. Bail was set at \$30,000. Rather than sit in jail until his trial, Crowe signed off his house, barn and shed as security.

Seven weeks later, Crowe appeared in court with a high-priced attorney. He pleaded guilty, paid a \$3,000 fine and had his hunting and trapping privileges revoked until 1999.

What had started off as a relatively minor offense (albeit a very important safety regulation — hunting without fluorescent orange) turned into a disaster for Crowe.

Had he stopped for Deputy Gaydos, he would have faced a \$100 fine without the likelihood of revocation.

But Crowe chose to flee. And when confronted by Gaydos, he became uncooperative, his hostile behavior erupting to the point that additional officers had to be called in.

Crowe's willful disregard for wildlife laws, and the officers who enforce them, cost him dearly. I understand that in addition to his high fine and hunting and trapping revocations, his attorney fees were staggering. Furthermore, he is a convicted felon who could have been sent back to prison.

I see Butch Crowe once in a while, and it seems he always has a cocky grin or sneer for me — as if I were the one who lost thousands of dollars and had my hunting privileges revoked for eight years.

Redtail Days

ON A WINDY, cold day in late October, raptor bander Mark Shields set up his lure pole and bow net in the middle of our First Field. The winds were north-northwest and red-tailed hawks were “slope-soaring” on the wind.

As I watched, Shields baited his lure pole with a large homing pigeon, which was dressed in a leather “jacket” already covered with talon marks. Using such a jacket cuts down on pigeon mortality, he told me. While he worked, he also explained “trapper’s rush”—the excitement he feels as he watches a hawk dive at the trap. All the while he set up, a steady procession of redtails whizzed past high in the sky.

Finally, the trap was ready. Dressed in camouflage, I crouched behind his wooden blind while he scanned for hawks through his binoculars. As soon as he spotted one in the distance, he too crouched down, watching carefully through a slit in the blind until the hawk came closer. Then he twitched the line attached to the pigeon, making it flap enticingly. But although dozens of hawks soared overhead in the next couple hours, not one paused to look at the bait.

“There are days when you see what seems to be a million hawks, and not one of them will come down. It’s like they’ve eaten and now they want to go wherever it is they’re going,” Shields said. “Hawk mi-

gration trapping is all a matter of geography, position and weather.”

Since the weather was ideal and the hawks were flying, he decided that his position, halfway up First Field above the power line right-of-way, might be wrong. So I offered to climb to the top of First Field and check out the action. In the few minutes I stood there, four redtails and one sharp-shinned hawk flew swiftly above the ridge, but then descended quickly and hovered low over the field before flying on. As I headed back down to tell Shields, I met him as he crested the ridge, anxious to know what I had discovered.

We stood there weighing the pros and cons of changing the trap site and the time it would take to make the move. Already the best of the morning hours were gone and the midday lull was imminent. Then, as we continued debating, a mature bald eagle hove into sight. It not only flew over, but it flew in *low*, circling several times above our heads like a good luck omen.

Even without binoculars we could easily see its white head and tail shining in the luminous autumn sunlight. With what seemed to be a clear signal from our national emblem, Shields relocated at the top of the field in front of a 20-year-old planting of Norway spruces.

But we were too late. The migration had already slowed from the furious pace of the morning hours, and the few

By Marcia Bonta



The Naturalist's Eye

redtails we saw stayed high, their heads pointed away from us instead of toward the trap. No matter how hard Shields twitched the line or how frantically the pigeon flapped, he simply could not lure a hawk.

Soaring, not eating, continued to be their priority on that cold, windswept day. And as the day wore on, the hawks soared higher and higher until they were mere specks in a field of infinite blue.

I never did have a chance to experience "trapper's rush," but raptor banding had given me an excuse to spend an exhilarating day on the ridge, enjoying the spectacular view and admiring the vivid autumn colors. It also made it easier to understand why growing numbers of people are contracting raptor migration fever. No doubt they have already discovered, as Shields has, that "one of the best parts of chasing hawks is getting out in the fall and seeing all the color."

When we finally packed it in for the day, we had seen a respectable list of the migrating raptors: three sharp-shinned hawks, two Cooper's hawks, innumerable turkey vultures, 58 red-tailed hawks and, best of all, the bald eagle. That sighting alone had amply compensated for our unsuccessful banding attempt and made me wonder how many migrating eagles I miss each autumn when I'm not out watching.

Our ridge is part of Bald Eagle Mountain, which starts at Lock Haven and, with only a few interruptions and numerous name changes, continues down to Tennessee. Its length makes it ideal for migrating raptors.

It is also ideal for human gliders. According to sailplane enthusiast Karl Striedick, it is the longest continuous ridge in the United States that's suitable for soaring. Back in May 1976, Striedick set a world record for out-and-return soaring in one day — from Lock Haven to Tennessee and back — 1,015 miles along our ridge. On windy days in both spring and fall, we

often count almost as many human-operated sailplanes as we do migrating raptors. For Striedick, at least, part of the joy of soaring is the opportunity to be aloft with the hawks.

But for those of us who are earthbound and want to remain so, we get our close encounters with migrating raptors either by sitting on the ridge tops and watching through binoculars or, as frequently happens at our place, waiting for an immature to pay us an unscheduled visit.

Such a visit, in fact, had occurred several days before Shields' unsuccessful banding attempt. On that clear bright day, Shields might have agreed that the geography was right but the weather and position certainly weren't — it was the afternoon of a windless day and I was sitting on our veranda.

But as I settled down, I spotted an immature redtail balanced precariously on the telephone line. As I watched it through my binoculars, it dove down into First Field and floundered around on the ground before flying up, its talons still empty. It then landed on a black walnut tree near the barn, giving me another good view before it swooped down and out of sight.

Beautiful but dumb is probably an apt description of immature redtails in autumn. Like teenagers, they are still testing their boundaries, and their inexperience often gets them into trouble. In the days when all hawks were considered varmints and shot on sight, that immature would've made a good target.

It quickly returned to sit on a utility pole that overlooks my bluebird box. A pair of bluebirds fluttered closely around the hawk for several minutes, as if protesting its presence, while I walked slowly toward it for a closer view.

Suddenly it again dove straight at the ground, landed awkwardly on its belly, thrashed around in the dried grass, and



finally flew to a utility pole behind our shed. There it perched and tore long, dangling strips from its prey — probably a rat, judging from the size — which it ate in fast gulps.

After its meal it flew to still another utility pole halfway across First Field. I walked within 145 feet of its perch and lay down in the warm field grasses to watch. Never had I had such an opportunity to study an immature hawk close up for, as it turned out, nearly an hour. If I was an artist, I would've had an outstanding chance to capture the bird's colors.

Instead, I carefully recorded its color scheme in my notebook — a brown back with white markings on its wings and reddish-brown near its eyes with a light stripe over each one. Its throat and breast were white, except for faint brown streaks, and it had a heavily spotted belly band, white underparts, and a black and brown horizontally striped tail with a faint white line at its edge.

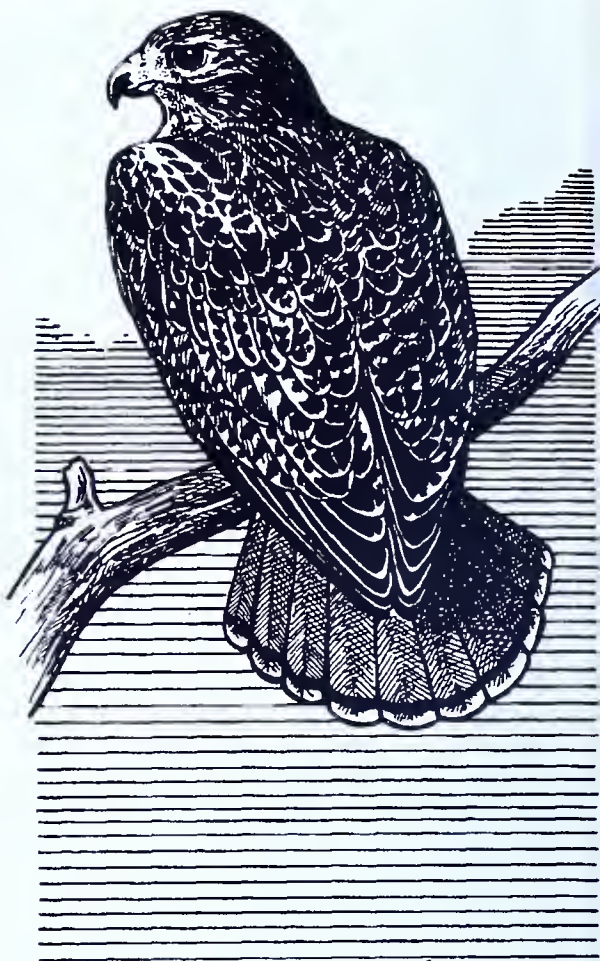
Aglow in the autumn sunlight, it looked far more handsome than any drawing or photograph in my field guides of the incredibly variable colors of an immature red-tailed hawk.

I spent the rest of the afternoon following it around the field from pole to pole, watching several more unsuccessful dives for prey, until it was time for me to cook supper. Our son David said he'd seen it sitting in a tree beside our driveway near dusk.

The following morning the hawk was perched in a tree in our front yard, and our yard squirrels muttered their protests in low, grumbling undertones. As I watched, the hawk dove into a wild rose bush after a songbird — which it missed.

Later, while I hung out laundry in the backyard, it sat 50 feet from me on a pole near the garage and looked around alertly. I sat down to watch and was startled a couple minutes later when it swooped within a couple feet of me as it headed toward the songbirds scolding in the front yard lilac bush. Once again it missed.

Two American crows appeared to taunt



J. R. Vanish

the inept hawk from the driveway. They chased it to a black walnut tree near the barn, perched above the hawk in the same tree, and cawed loudly before flying away. The youngster then flew to the bluebird box utility pole, and that's where it was when I took my morning walk. It was still in First Field, perched on still another pole, when I returned at noon.

Shortly afterward, it finally resumed its migration. I knew the moment it had gone because the squirrels reappeared in the yard and the trees filled up with songbirds. But to have had so many intimate hours with an immature red-tailed hawk had lent a special aura to autumn's shining days.

This column was taken from Appalachian Autumn, a new book of Marcia's scheduled to be published by University of Pittsburgh Press in 1994.

The Color Orange

Archers will have to wear fluorescent orange during the latter part of the fall season. Will they be handicapped?

By Keith C. Schuyler

HOW MUCH did wearing fluorescent orange affect your hunting in the extra week of the 1992 archery deer season?

Strangely, although I asked quite a few hunters that question, I got no definitive answers. Most just shrugged and said they didn't really know. Others said they didn't see any deer within shooting distance.

There were plenty of hunters afield last year who were quite visible. I had expected a lot of feedback on the effects of blaze orange, but since I didn't get it I'll have to draw on my own experiences.

On my best day, during the antlerless deer season, a doe came through an evergreen thicket just out of bow range. It either did not see me or simply ignored me. Then, later, from the opposite direction, another doe came running full-tilt. Perhaps I moved. Regardless, it reversed gears without breaking stride and ran back the way it had come.

Some time later, after I had moved to within shooting distance of the trail taken by the first deer, two entered the thicket on the same course as the previous one. This time I know I didn't move. The deer did, though. They quickly turned and ran back the way they had come.

I was wearing a fluorescent orange vest and hat to meet — and well exceed — the minimum 250 square-inch requirement. During the course of the day, a companion wearing every bit as much fluorescent or-



ARCHERS SHOULD try to break up fluorescent orange because deer are more likely to detect a hunter dressed in a solid color — no matter what the color is.

ange as I, almost stepped on a bedded deer.

On another hunt last year, this one during the bucks-only archery extension, a yearling doe came out and fed within 20 to 30 yards of me for 35 minutes (I timed it). She looked my way a number of times and seemed to finally accept my presence.

While I was watching that yearling doe, a buck came in about 40 yards above and past her. He looked my way and stopped. After a mutual staring session, the buck unhurriedly reversed direction and disappeared into the trees.

I've drawn two conclusions from these experiences. If you're hunting during a



portion of the bow season when 250 square inches of fluorescent orange is required, I would advise you to position yourself where you might not be as likely to be detected by deer. And while moving, make sure you do it even more slowly and carefully when wearing blaze orange.

Concealment becomes more difficult with each passing day, and will be even more so now that the bow season runs into mid-November. On the other hand, remember that the fluorescent orange regulation was enacted to protect archers, so don't conceal yourself to the extent that other hunters won't be aware of your presence.

New Guidelines

The Commission's fluorescent orange regulations mean bowhunters, as well as all other hunters, have to familiarize themselves with a new set of guidelines. Most hunters know how to measure square inches — simply multiply height by width. For example, a 10x10-inch patch equals 100 square inches.

A solid blaze orange baseball-type cap well exceeds the 100 square inches required when hunting spring turkeys (when moving to or from a stand) and for hunting woodchucks.



A hat is also part of the total requirement for deer, bear, turkey and small game hunting. The law reads 250 square inches of fluorescent orange on the "head, chest and back combined" that must be visible for 360 degrees. The regulation doesn't apply to the portion of the bow season that falls before the general small game season, or to post-Christmas deer seasons.

A hunting suit of all fluorescent orange, with a hat, removes any risk of hunting contrary to the law, but in such an outfit, you can be overdressed for bowhunting. There are many alternatives that are economical, satisfy the law, and don't compromise hunting success.

One option is the common small-game vest, which breaks up the color into patches. Most have orange across the shoulders, both fore and aft, as well as over pockets and on the detachable small game bag. Worn in conjunction with a blaze orange hat, such a vest will satisfy the law while still breaking up the orange.

Another alternative is the reversible vest that has full conventional camouflage on one side and fluorescent orange on the other. That way the hunter has one article of clothing that can be used in all seasons.

Of course, you can sew or use black Velcro to attach patches of fluorescent orange cloth on a conventional camouflage suit. Velcro fasteners make it easy to remove the patches for conventional archery seasons. Four patches of fluorescent orange measuring 8x8 inches, for example, fastened on a garment — placed in such a way that they're visible for 360 degrees on chest and back — will do the trick when a proper orange hat is added.

Modifying a camouflage garment in this manner will not negate its usefulness. The Velcro will not unduly lessen the camouflage effect when fluorescent orange is not used.

A CAMO pattern that includes fluorescent orange, left, or a small game vest with an ample amount of fluorescent orange, right, are two good options for bowhunters who don't want to wear solid fluorescent orange garments.

It should be noted that fluorescent orange can fade to a point where its light reflecting quality is no longer useful — or, in fact, legal. I have an old cap that today, after years of service, would hardly qualify as fluorescent.

If a fluorescent orange suit is broken up with patches of black or another dark color, it is less easily spotted by deer. Many experiments have shown any solid color is more likely to attract an animal's attention.

So-called fluorescent orange camouflage is offered by a number of clothing manufacturers, and it seems possible that more makers will begin to produce such gear. But keep in mind that the total amount of orange must add up to at least 250 square inches. (At this point I should mention that some states allow only solid blaze orange to satisfy their requirements.)

Because our forests across most of the state are largely deciduous, some of the best concealment to be found in late fall is in evergreen trees. Each tree is a natural blind to which deer have long been accustomed. In evergreen forests, particularly those through which deer must move, or choose to move, you are more apt to get within shooting distance.

With well over a quarter-million ar-

chers afield, plus the substantial contingent of small game and turkey hunters that soon follow, deer will be kept moving. Wait them out. Your chances of stalking deer are slim anyway, and they're even further reduced after fluorescent orange requirements become effective with the opening of the general small game seasons.

Remain Motionless

There is a tendency to forget that we are more visible with blaze orange clothing. Although deer have a hard time distinguishing between natural objects and a motionless hunter, regardless of how he is dressed, fluorescent orange is more apt to draw their attention. Movement is a key factor; the motionless hunter has a greater chance of remaining undetected.

Much of this is influenced by the time of day and the amount of available light.

Many studies have been conducted to try to determine how deer and other mammals perceive color. Some of the information I'm going to present here was obtained from reports by Dr. Jay Neitz, a vision scientist at the Medical College of Wisconsin. He made a presentation to the International Hunter Education Association in Calgary, Alberta, Canada, in May of this year.

I used observations from him in my article "Confusing Camouflage" (September 1990). He has done considerably more research on deer vision since then.

Although all mammals have color-sensitive rods and cones in their eyes, those that spend most of their life in subdued light also have a reflecting surface at the back of the eye which increases visual acuity.

Humans have three classes of cones that permit excellent color vision in good light. Deer have but two, which limits them to two-color vision, primarily blue and yellow. Anything in between appears to them as gray.

Deer lack red cones, which might account for my success at concealment with a red and black camouflage suit for many years. Further, since the color orange em-





AN EFFECTIVE AND ECONOMICAL way to satisfy the new fluorescent orange requirement is to cut four 8x8-inch squares of fluorescent orange material, and then attach them to a coat or vest using black Velcro. When used in conjunction with a fluorescent orange hat, this arrangement will satisfy Pennsylvania's safety regulations.

braces red and yellow, and deer do see yellow, it would seem we would be readily visible to deer when wearing fluorescent orange. But a deer's sensitivity to orange is about half that of ours.

However, as light wanes, deer are about eight times more sensitive to ultraviolet light — such as that emitted by clothing (regardless of color) washed in detergents that contain brighteners. While our ability to determine color and our visual acuity fades as darkness sets in, a deer's vision, in many respects, continues to get better.

Less Conspicuous?

There is a laundry detergent on the market called Sport-Wash that contains no brighteners. Using it in conjunction with the same company's UV-Killer is said to eliminate ultraviolet reflection and make the hunter less conspicuous to deer.

Both the application of these commercial products and the full story on visual

acuity of deer require individual study for better understanding. Despite the exhaustive tests that have been conducted on animal vision, there are indications that further study may be warranted.

Twelve years ago, a national magazine reported on a study concluding: "In spite of all you've heard or read, deer are not color blind. The scientific proof is beyond dispute."

Without arguing the point, I wrote an article for the same magazine claiming that if animals aren't color blind, my field experience indicates they don't react to red. There was no rebuttal.

I don't think we'll ever know exactly how or what deer see. Even color blind people can't describe exactly what they see. One such person very dear to me once bought a pair of "blue" sneakers with which he was quite pleased, both for their attractive color and the special price tag.

They were a horrible purple.

Big Game Reloading

By Don Lewis

Photos by Helen Lewis

AN ELDERLY MAN came to me with two boxes of .30-06s cases he wanted me to reload. "Put round-nose bullets in 'em," he said. "I really prefer pointed bullets, but my buddies tell me that round-nose bullets expand better."

I asked him how long he'd been hunting deer. He quickly replied he'd been at it for 55 years and had killed 44 deer. Then I asked how many times he'd used round-nose bullets.

"I don't recall ever using a round-nosed bullet. Back during the 1930s, I used Winchester's 130-grain Mushroom or Expanding point cartridges in my .270. In the '50s, I switched to a .30-06 and 150-grain Silvertips. Lately, I've been using Remington's 150-grain Bronze Points."

I kept after him, asking why, after decades of success with pointed bullets, he had the sudden desire to change bullet styles. He continued to insist that, based on what friends had told him, round-nose bullets expand better.

"I don't want to be at odds with your friends," I said, "but what they are telling you isn't exactly true or sound advice."

Then I brought out Speer's 1977 *No. 9 Reloading Manual*. I showed him where it said pointed soft-points (spitzers) will normally expand as well as round-nose bullets. The diameter at the junction of the jacket and lead point has more effect on expansion than does the pointed shape.

"Does that calm your concerns?" I asked. "If you like pointed bullets, use them."

"That's enough for me. Fill 'em with 150-grain spitzers," he said.



TIM LEWIS, Don's son, approaches a nice 6-point buck he took on the opening day last year. To drop this trophy, Tim used a 150-grain spitzer and a tested load of 4064 in a .308.

Round-nose bullets are designed for rifles with tubular magazines, where the use of pointed bullets could initiate, upon recoil, the detonation of shells in the magazine tube. Round-nose and flat-nose bullets do not retain velocity as well as spitzer types, but they do expand well and have good penetration. Still, they should be used for shots under 175 yards.

External ballistics may help guide bullet selections when reloading for deer or bear. Sectional density is the ratio of a bullet's mass to its diameter. All else being equal, the higher the sectional density, the deeper the penetration. Because sectional density



is not affected by bullet shape, the figure is the same for, say, all 180-grain .30 caliber (.308 diameter) bullets. SD figures are listed in reloading manuals.

Sectional density is but one factor to consider when making a bullet choice. Common sense tells us that a streamlined bullet slips through the air easier than a blunt shaped one.

Ballistic Coefficient

Ballistic coefficient enters the picture at this point. This term relates to the bullet's ability to overcome air resistance. The higher the BC, the better a bullet will overcome air resistance and the flatter it will shoot. Unlike sectional density, a bullet's shape or form significantly affects ballistic coefficient.

Understanding these two terms can give the handloader (and the factory ammo shooter as well) an idea of the differences among bullets and how they relate to performance. It's a big help in selecting a bullet for a particular application.

While any bullet .243 and up could be used for deer, handloaders can be very

selective. For instance, for deer hunting I think a 180-grain bullet in a .308 is a poor choice because it requires virtually a maximum powder charge to get a muzzle velocity of 2,500 feet per second. With a 150-grain bullet, however, a moderate charge will give a muzzle velocity of 2,625 fps. I think bullets heavier than 168 grains really defeat the efficiency of the .308. What about other cartridges?

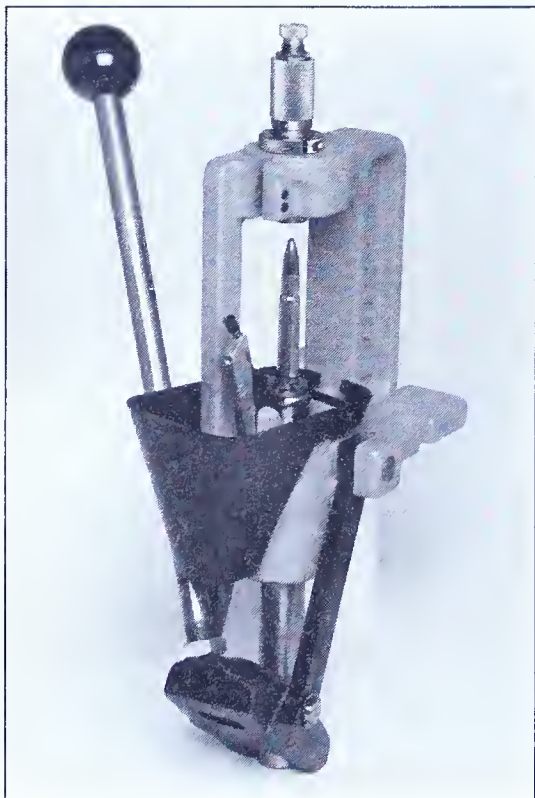
The .25-06 Rem. is gaining converts in the deer hunting ranks, and rightfully so. The cartridge started to come into its own with the development of slow-burning powders such as H4350, IMR4831, Winchester 785 and Accurate 3100. If those propellants had been available in the round's wildcat days, it would have been a factory cartridge long before Remington standardized it in 1969.

I've found accuracy for this cartridge is better with powder charges slightly under maximum.

The .270 Win. has long been one of the finest whitetail cartridges in America. When introduced in 1925, it stirred up a pot full of controversy. Critics claimed it was inferior to the .30-06, but the .270 had too much going for it to be knocked out. The late Jack O'Conner made the .270 famous by detailing in his writings the many kills he made with the cartridge — which included all native American game from javelina to Yukon moose.

The 130-grain bullet has always been the most popular, but some consider it too explosive on deer. The 150-grain bullet maintains a trajectory nearly as flat as the 130-grain and provides higher energy and deeper penetration on large game. And in recent years, hunters have found 140-grain bullets to be a good compromise.

Speer's 130-grain boattail in front of a charge of 4831 leaves the muzzle around 3,000 fps. That's plenty of speed, and the



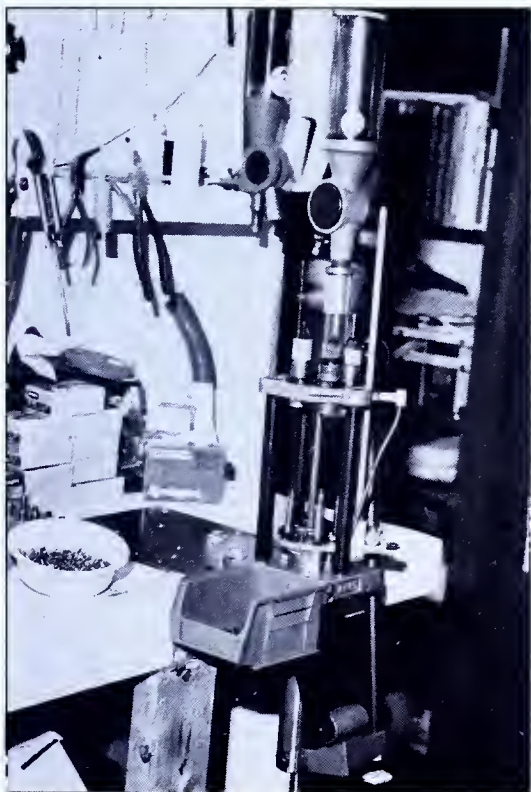
FOR HUNTING purposes, reloaders can easily get by with a single stage press, left, which loads rounds one at a time. More experienced reloaders interested in quantity, often opt for a progressive press, right.

130-grain boattail's high BC of .449 reduces the trajectory arc and adds extra yards. It will reach out.

Remington's 7mm-08, .280 and 7mm Mag. are proving the .284 bullet to be a whale of a deer-stopper. In 1980, Remington gave factory recognition to the 7mm-.308 wildcat and called it the 7mm-08. Silhouette shooters soon learned of the round's effectiveness on long-range metallic targets.

I did some early testing with the 7mm-08. Both the 130-grain Speer spitzer and 139-grain Hornady Spire point gave muzzle velocities between 2,600 and 2,750 fps with a half-dozen powders. Some rifles have short chambers and short magazines, which means bullets have to be seated pretty deep. That's one reason I stuck with lighter bullets.

The 7mm-08 is a potent deer cartridge, and it's not just for young or slightly built hunters. It can handle appropriate bullet weights and shoot them with sufficient speed. Handloaders can obtain muzzle velocities slightly above 3,000 fps with 130-grain bullets, and that spells long range.



The .280 Rem. (once called 7mm Express) is based on the .30-06 case and is slightly longer than the .270 — which prevents accidental chambering. While many .270 fans may not admit it, the .280 has better ballistics. It handles a full range of bullets, but slow powders work best. It's a fine Pennsylvania big game cartridge for sure.

Strong Following

Since the 7mm Rem. Mag.'s introduction in 1962, the belted cartridge has garnered a strong following. It can handle an array of bullet weights ranging from 115 to 175 grains, and animals from groundhogs to moose. I still prefer 139- to 140-grain slugs for deer. Muzzle velocity can hit 3,100 fps with IMR 4350 powder behind a Hornady 139-grain bullet. Bear hunters should stick with 175-grain slugs with muzzle velocities running around 2,700 fps.

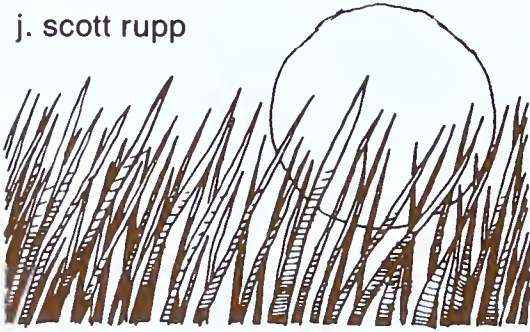
The Shooting Times Westerner is a recent 7mm wildcat that's getting a lot of attention. The STW is nothing more than an 8mm Rem. Mag. case necked down to 7mm. Generally speaking, with the same bullet weights, it generates muzzle velocities several hundred feet per second faster than the 7mm Mag.

The venerable .30-06 has a generous case capacity and a long neck, which makes it ideal to reload. The "aught-six" will shoot a variety of bullets, but I never got much accuracy from those below 130 grains. I believe the 150-grain bullet is tops for deer, but long-range shooters should opt for the 165-grain boattail. I've found that a charge of 4895 behind a 150-grain Speer boattail (which has a ballistic coefficient of .423) is adequate for deer up to 200 yards.

After nearly 40 years of reloading, I believe there are no secret load combinations. Developing a top load requires a lot of shooting and maintaining good records, and while it's not at all complicated, it does require plenty of work. Remember that speed is not the paramount goal — accuracy is. An accurate rifle in your hands is well worth the effort.

In the wind

j. scott rupp



The Clinton administration has proposed a package that will reform rangeland management. The Dept. of Interior proposal would, over three years, raise grazing fees charged ranchers who run cattle on public land from \$1.86 per animal per month to \$4.28. More importantly, rangeland management plans would be overseen by advisory councils representing all rangeland uses — to include wildlife and recreation — rather than be dominated by livestock interests.

New Jersey has developed a remedial hunter education course that some game law violators must pass before they're allowed to buy licenses again. According to the Izaak Walton League, the program is similar to the state's remedial driver education program. Once they pass the nine-hour course, hunters can buy licenses again — although they receive a one-year probationary stamp on the tag.

The federal government plans to spend half the settlement from the Exxon Valdez oil spill on a new wildlife refuge. *Sports Afield* reports the government will purchase about 200,000 acres of private land around Prince William Sound and the Gulf of Alaska and set them aside for habitat restoration. The case against Exxon was settled for \$50 million.

Florida has set an across-the-board limit for mercury emissions from trash incinerators. In the first such measure of its kind in the nation, older facilities will have to meet the same standards as newer ones. The state's environmental agency decreed all municipal trash incinerators will reduce emissions 80 percent by 1998. Some blame mercury for the near-total demise of the Florida panther and for the collapse of Everglades wading bird populations.

It's likely the Environmental Protection Agency will seek a ban on lead fishing sinkers within the next few months. According to the National Wildlife Federation, EPA wants to outlaw some lead sinkers because of the hazard they pose to waterfowl that might ingest them. The agency may also ban the use of zinc, copper and brass as substitutes if they're found to present toxicity problems.

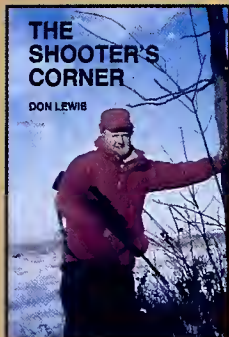
Only 13 Hawaiian crows are known to exist, and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service has decided to take first-clutch eggs and incubate them under controlled conditions, reports *Bird Watchers Digest*. Similar programs have been successfully used to reintroduce peregrine falcons here.

Wind power, a pollution-free energy source, may be killing large numbers of raptors. At Altamont Pass in California, 7,300 turbines take advantage of strong winds to churn out electricity; birds of prey, also taking advantage of the currents as they migrate, fly into the turbines. Audubon says a study showed as many as 500 raptors — including 78 golden eagles — were killed in a two-year period.

Answers: 1 – matchlock, 2 – muzzle, 3 – flintlock, 4 – percussion cap, 5 – cartridge, 6 – stock, barrel, action

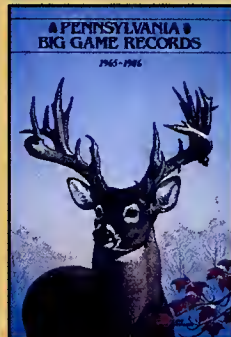
PGC

Books

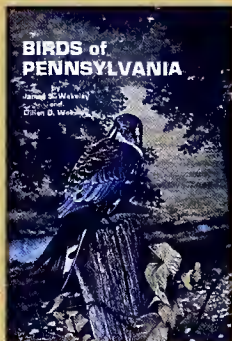


The Shooter's Corner by Don Lewis is a 449-page hardcover detailing nearly every facet of the shooting sports.
Price: \$15

Pennsylvania Big Game Records, 1965-1986, lists the state's official trophy deer and bear records, along with many stories of exciting hunts.
Price: \$10



Birds of Pennsylvania, a 214-page hardcover by James and Lillian Wakeley, details birds most commonly found here, plus information on their biology and behavior.
Price: \$10

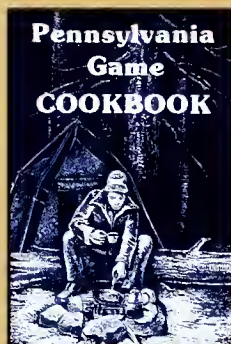


Mammals of Pennsylvania by J. Kenneth Doult et al profiles the state's mammals — from voles and shrews to bear and deer — along with their roles in state history.
Price: \$4



Gone for the Day is a compilation of Game News columns written and illustrated by famed wildlife artist and naturalist, the late Ned Smith.
Price: \$4

Pennsylvania Game Cookbook is a collection of nearly 200 recipes for cooking popular, and not so popular, game animals.
Price: \$4



All prices include handling and postage. Pennsylvania residents add 6 percent sales tax. Make check or money order (no cash, please) payable to Pennsylvania Game Commission, Dept. MS, 2001 Elmerton Ave., Harrisburg, PA 17110-9797. Be sure to ask for a complete list of the agency's paid and free publications.

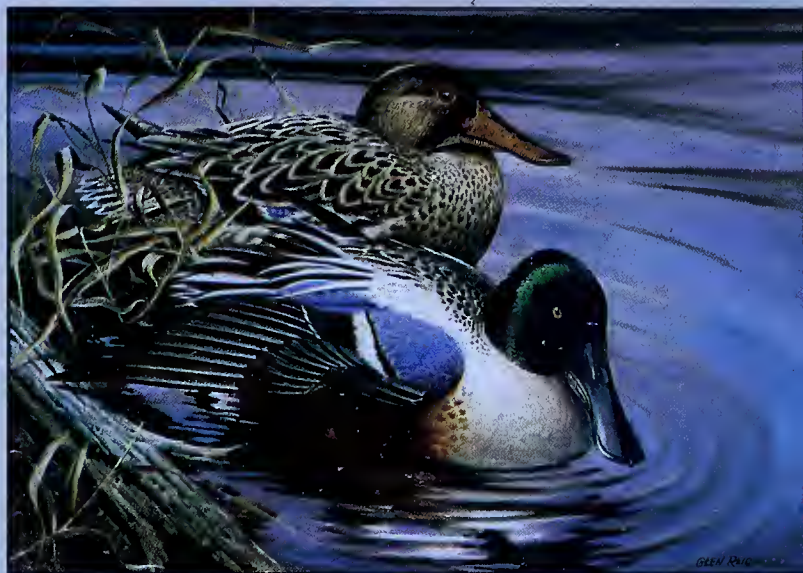
1993

WATERFOWL STAMP

“Dawdling Dabblers”

CONSERVATION

Each year the Commission offers for sale a voluntary waterfowl conservation stamp. Profits from these sales are used for wetland acquisition, habitat development and



waterfowl-related education programs. This year's design features a pair of northern shovellers by York artist Glen Reichard.

COLLECTOR VALUE

The stamps have great collector value because editions are available for a limited time only; stamps remaining after two years are destroyed. The 1991 stamp will be destroyed after Dec. 31.

COST

Stamps cost \$5.50 each, \$22 for a plate block of four and \$55 for a full sheet of 10. When you purchase five or more full sheets (any available editions), the price drops to \$40 per sheet. Prices include delivery. Pennsylvania residents add 6 percent sales tax.

Waterfowl conservation stamps are available at all Commission offices and wildlife management areas, and at participating license issuing agents and stamp dealers. Limited edition signed prints are available from art dealers and galleries.





Working Together for Wildlife

IN TIME FOR CHRISTMAS!



- ◆ "Winter Birds" by Stephen Leed is the 12th limited edition fine art print for the Working Together for Wildlife program. And, for the first time, **the print is available in time for Christmas.** It's hard to imagine a better gift for the naturalists in your family.

"Winter Birds" is limited to 600 signed and numbered prints on acid-free, 100 percent rag paper. Image size is about 15x22½ inches. The prints are \$125, delivered; framed prints cost \$97.50 more.

- ◆ Prices include delivery; state residents must add 6% sales tax.
- ◆ Proceeds from WTFW sales benefit Pennsylvania's nongame management and research projects. So far, the program has raised more than \$1 million and has helped bring eagles, ospreys, otters and other species back to our landscape.
 - ◆ Some past prints are still available: kestrel ('86), elk ('87), egret ('88), white-tailed deer ('89), bald eagle ('90), ruffed grouse ('92) and bear ('93).
- ◆ Order from the Pennsylvania Game Commission, Dept. M5, 2001 Elmerton Ave., Harrisburg, PA 17110-9797.

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PENNSYLVANIA GAME NEWS (ISSN 0031-451X) is published monthly for \$9 per year, \$25.50 for three years (Pennsylvania residents add 6% sales tax), or membership in Pennsylvania's Cooperative Farm-Game Project or Safety Zone Project, to Canada and all other foreign countries, \$10 U.S. currency, per year. Published by the Pennsylvania Game Commission, Harrisburg, PA. Phone (717) 787-4250. Second-class postage paid at Harrisburg, Pa. CHANGE OF ADDRESS: POSTMASTER: Send both old and new addresses to Pennsylvania Game News, 2001 Elmerton Ave., Harrisburg, PA 17110-9797. Allow six weeks for processing. Material accepted is subject to our requirements for editing and revising. Author payment covers all rights and title to accepted material, including manuscripts, photographs, drawings and illustrations. No information contained in this magazine may be used for advertising or commercial purposes. Opinions expressed here do not necessarily reflect those of the Pennsylvania Game Commission. Copyright © 1993 by the Pennsylvania Game Commission, an Equal Opportunity Employer, the programs of which are all administered consistent with the goals and objectives of Affirmative Action. All rights reserved.

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Admirable Track Record

WITH MORE than a million acres of forests, timber management is a major facet of the agency. To explain and promote our forest management program, a field trip for legislators, Commissioners, members of the news media and others was conducted last September, following the fall Commission meeting. Even on an unseasonably cold day, under a lingering threat of showers, nearly 50 people gathered on SGL 170 — known as The Cove — for an up-to-date briefing on where we are today and hope to be in the future.

The overriding goal of the PGC's forest management program is to provide and enhance wildlife habitat. As Land Management Director Greg Grabowicz explained, "In basic terms, wildlife needs food, cover and water. It's like a chain. Managers identify the weakest link and then strengthen it." A forest management plan taking these needs into account has been prepared for virtually every state game lands.

In general terms, PGC forests are managed on 100-year rotation cycles, with approximately 1 percent of each forest being cut every year. This cycle results in a complete turnover of trees or forests every hundred years. The purpose, though, is to always have young seedlings, saplings, and mature and old forests on every unit. This management strategy satisfies the needs of every wild animal, from the yellowthroat warblers that live in newly cut areas, to the grouse and cottontails that prefer brush, to the deer, bear and owls, for example, that feed on mast and use old trees for nesting.

To conduct these cuts, agency foresters select sites, mark trees and then invite commercial timber operators to bid on the trees. Normally, the high bidder receives the right to cut the trees.

This process is very efficient and economical. The agency — or sportsmen — gets the habitat management benefit of the cutting and makes money on the timber. Not to be overlooked is the effects our timber cutting operations have on local economies, particularly in areas of the state that are economically depressed. As chief forester Bill Shaffer explained: "At any given time, we have 200 timber sales in work. With a conservative estimate of eight employees per timber cutting operation, we have, in effect, 1,600 people working for wildlife — for sportsmen — free of charge."

In actual practice, management procedures are much more refined and flexible, allowing managers to take into account the particular needs on each site. Preserving and enhancing spring seeps, marshes, streamsides and other wetlands is a high priority. Den trees, key food-producing trees and shrubs, and evergreen cover if it happens to be in short supply are all reserved from cutting.

During the tour, while pointing out a fruit-laden grape vine, Shaffer explained how not all grape vines produce fruits and that when foresters mark an area for cutting, they will preserve the trees the productive vines are growing on. This way, the grapes remain to provide food for wildlife, and also help reseed the area after cutting.

The Game Commission's forest management program has proven to be a most cost effective wildlife management tool. But with continued support from sportsmen, legislators and others, these efforts will become even more beneficial and efficient as the agency embarks upon its second century of service to the commonwealth. — *Bob Mitchell*

Letters

Editor:

I have enjoyed my friends' *Game News* so much that I finally decided to get my own subscription. My favorite parts are the hunting stories and the "Shooter's Corner." I would like to see more about muzzleloader hunting, though.

D. WILLIS,
MASURY, OH

Editor:

The letter in your September issue about people from the cities and neighboring states buying and posting what had been land open to hunting is correct. Many people don't realize this trend is largely being fostered by the current crisis in the dairy industry.

We dairy farmers are, for the most part, hunters and landowners. We feed the deer, turkey and rabbits, and the more there are, the more it costs us. It is in our best interests to control wildlife. For that reason, few of us post.

The shamefully low farm price for milk and the high cost of producing it is putting dairy farmers out of the business at a rate never before seen. Within a mile of our farm, three dairy herds have been sold just this year. The five of us remaining are teetering on the edge.

Each time one of us goes under, the land which once fed cows, deer, turkeys and bunnies is sold, often for development, and whether the buyers hunt or not, their first act is almost always to post their land.

As dairy families lose their farms, which are their livelihoods and their

heritage, thousands upon thousands of rural acres are lost forever, not only to farming, but to hunting. The hunter who thinks the fate of family farms is no concern of his is badly mistaken.

E.L. CLARKE,
MESHOPPEN

Editor:

It seems the content of *Game News* is drifting away from hunting. Of the six feature articles in your September issue, only three pertained to hunting.

Such a mix might be appropriate for May or June, but I feel it was a poor choice for September, the beginning of hunting season.

I suspect this is a response to the anti-hunting sentiment, which is out of place in your publication. I hunt, I enjoy hunting, and I don't need to make excuses for the sport. I think you'll find my feelings to be quite prevalent to most of your readers.

I have been a *Game News* fan since I read all the bound copies in my college library — which was well worth the effort — and I will always be a subscriber. Please make me proud of the publication.

R. BORGOYN,
PITTSBURGH

Editor:

I thoroughly enjoy *Game News*, and like many readers, I particularly like "Field Notes." It's probably been thought of before, but I think a book of "Field Notes,"

featuring the particularly humorous or interesting ones would be great. Nick Rosato's cartoons, of course, would be a must. I'll bet such a book would be popular.

M. OLSZEWSKI,
HARRISBURG

Editor:

I thoroughly enjoyed your video "On the Trail of Pennsylvania's Black Bears," and after reading in your April '92 issue about how much work went into making it, I appreciate it even more.

Thanks again for the tape, and I'm looking forward to more bear stories.

D. ATKERSON,
PAOLI

Editor:

Nearly every week I visit my parent's cabin in Tioga County, and I've kept a daily journal of bear, deer, turkeys, porcupines, raccoons, foxes, grouse and other wild animals I see there.

Just recently I had one of my most memorable sightings. While fishing in Pine Creek near Blackwell, I heard a commotion in the water behind me. Imagine my surprise as I turned and looked down to find next to my feet a wet, wide-eyed otter looking up at me.

I appreciate the efforts of the Game Commission and organizations such as the Wild Resource Conservation Fund for reintroducing such wildlife into the area.

M. SEIDEL,
FLEETWOOD

**Your comments are welcome. Mail them to "Letters,"
2001 Elmerton Ave., Harrisburg, PA 17110-9797.
Letters will be edited for brevity and clarity.**

Red Sunrise

By Doug Stetler

A RED HORIZON can precede beautiful weather or a terrible storm, depending on the time of day it occurs. For the hunters at Bear Pen Hollow Camp, one red sunrise will always be remembered.

Bear Pen Hollow Camp is neatly tucked away in the mountains of northcentral Pennsylvania. More than a century has mellowed the small cabin, but its magic still lingers for those who hunt from it. No, there aren't any tricks, nor easy prey, just a wilderness adventure for its members.

Reed Johnson rolled over and turned off his alarm; 4 a.m. and opening day had officially begun. His feet hit the floor and he started high-stepping over lumpy sleeping bags to reach the wood burner. While placing logs on the still glowing embers, Reed noticed a figure standing motionless behind a couch. He vaguely wondered what the guy was up to, but then went on to the kitchen and more pressing matters.

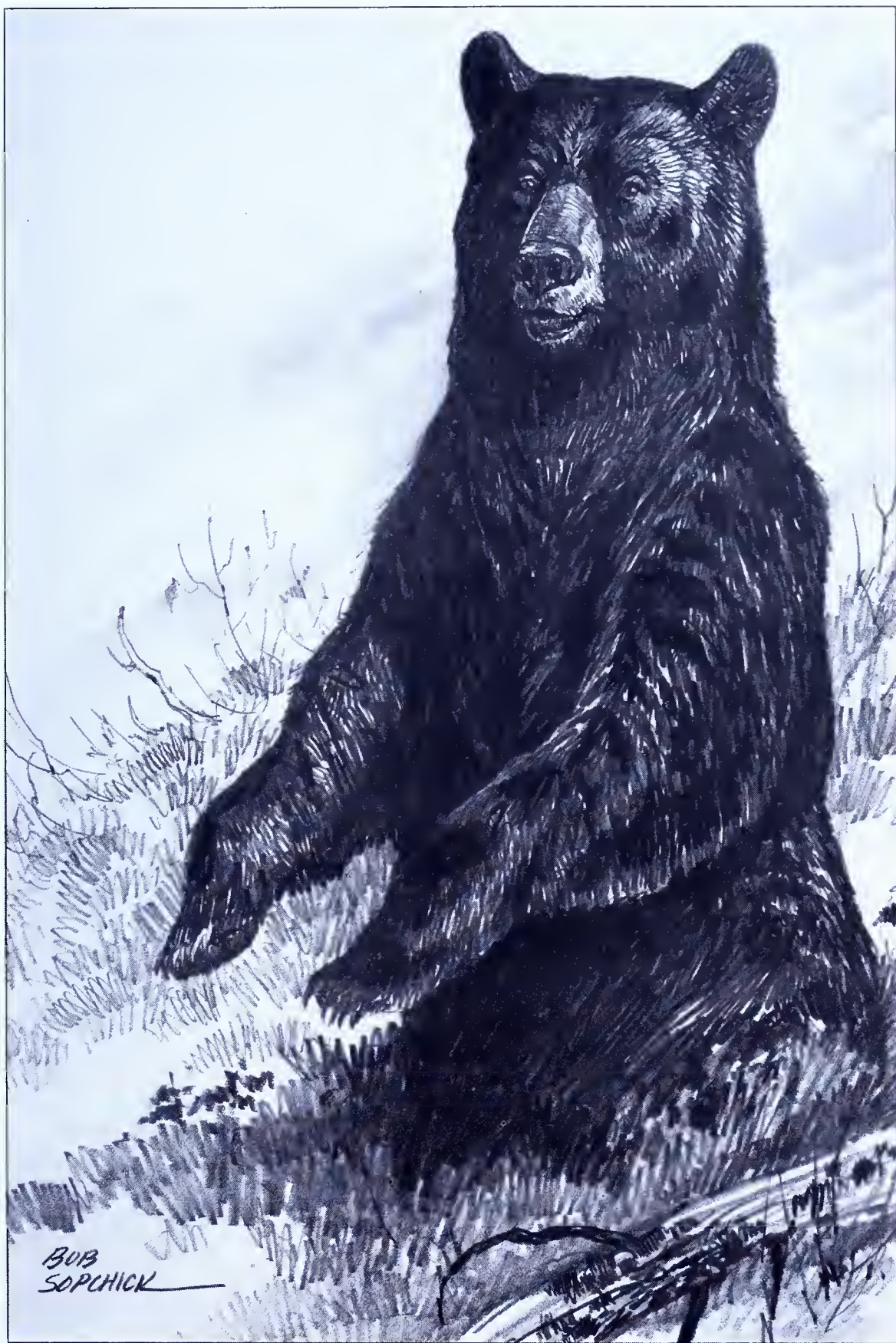
Then suddenly, without warning, a bear stood up on its hind legs only yards away and faced him.

Reed switched on the kitchen lights and was striking a match to light the gas stove when the room he had just come from seemed to erupt. Lights flashed on and guys were yelling. A bear was inside, standing on its hind legs next to Bud, who had been sleeping on the couch.

The bear, the gang quickly realized, was a mounted one, a trophy Donnie Clark had taken the year before. He had purposely arrived late so he could carry the bear in while everyone was asleep, for a real "bear awakening," Donnie explained.

Laughter filled the small cabin, and Donnie's bear certainly got the adrenaline flowing. Reed's prized buckwheat cakes and sausage added just the right amount of fuel to begin a day filled with steep hillsides and thick mountain laurel.

Before long the camp was full of hunters, both inside and out,



as people arrived to fill out the roster. After breakfast everyone congregated outside. The captains, Reed Johnson and Bill Hoover, announced who would be on their respective crews. Reed also gave a talk on safety. Drivers were expected to carry their guns with empty chambers, and when each drive was over, the hunters were expected to unload their guns until they reached the next location.

Reed also stressed the importance of each hunter knowing where everyone else was before taking any shots. Tom Baldrige closed the meeting with a prayer as the morning light appeared on the horizon.

Reed tried to squeeze in seven or eight drives each day. To keep the drives quick and orderly, the members carried walkie-talkies and used CBs while traveling between locations. Crew leaders told each hunter where to go and, in typical hunter fashion, everyone cooperated.

Each crew also carried a bugle to help keep the drivers in line and to let the watchers know when the drive had started and how far it had progressed. Theoretically, it could be a useful tool for rousting a bear.

Although they hunted from sunrise to sunset and snow covered the ground, no one saw a bear or even crossed a track by the end of the second day.

When the tired, bearless hunters got back to camp that night, Donnie quickly put his mounted bear in his van. With nobody encountering even the slightest bear sign, some of the guys were ribbing him about using the bear to warm up their rifles for the last day.

Wednesday morning found fewer hunters in camp, but those still around were full of enthusiasm. The previous two days had been snowy and windy, but the final morning greeted the hunters with a surprise: On

the horizon was a beautiful, illuminating red sky.

There's an old saying, "Red sky at night, hunter's delight; red sky in the morning, hunters take warning." Not surprisingly, visions of cold wind-chill factors and blizzards entered the hunters' minds.

By the end of the first drive, however, the weather had changed considerably. Instead of the expected stormy sky, the clouds had rolled away and the temperature began rising, creating a very pleasant last day.

The second drive went through woodlots surrounded by farmland, next to a small strip overgrown with briars and young saplings. The drive proved uneventful, and some of the drivers and watchers had already left when Bill Hoover yelled up to Reed, "How about that small narrow strip?"

Reed had just walked by the strip, twice, while setting up the watch, but he figured they might as well push through it while they were there. Reed sent Charley Zerphey out ahead to watch, while he

and Bud Freeman pushed through the strip. Reed had taken only a few steps when Charley yelled, "Hey, there's bear tracks out here on the upper side."

Reed yelled for Charley to hurry out to the point and then carefully pushed ahead. Searching for any bear sign, Reed stopped, put the bugle to his lips and barked out charge.

Then suddenly, without any warning, a bear stood up only yards away and faced him. By the time Reed swapped the bugle for his rifle, the "mountain magic" had worked for the bear. It completely disappeared.

A few steps later, Reed spotted the bruin in an opening. His rifle — a .270 wildcat — was in his hands this time, and a 150-grain bullet put the bear down for good.



THEY FOLLOWED the tracks, which led to a large boulder. It appeared the bear had disappeared in a tunnel under the big rock.

While Reed was shooting at his bear, Charley had also started shooting, and a 220-grain handload from his .308 found its mark and a second bear was taken. By this time Bud had seen two bears moving out in front of him.

With his heart racing, he kept looking and hoping for a clear shot. In just a matter of moments, his opportunity came and a 180-grain bullet accounted for the party's third bear.

With all the shooting and shouting going on, it wasn't long before the gang had reassembled. And it was a good thing, too, because plenty of hands were needed to haul out the three trophies. Once back at camp, WCO Colleen Shannon stopped by to offer congratulations and to inspect the bears.

Several hours of daylight were still left, so the crew went back out to drive more of the area that had produced the three trophies. As he was pushing through the area, Reed heard a commotion in front of him and then saw a bear. Having already filled his tag, he gave the bear a royal send-off with his bugle.

The next drive produced a set of tracks, but the bear had passed through before the drive was made. With time for one last push, Reed elected to end the bear season at the same spot where the season had begun Monday morning.

This drive had been in progress only a few minutes when excited shouting came from the thick pines. "Hey, I cut a fresh track. There he goes; wow it's a big one."

"No, wait. There's two, no there's even more; one just went back through."

"Hold up everybody. Walk over to the foot of the mountain. We're gonna bring it through again," Reed hollered.

The second time was just like the first, bear running all around in front of the excited drivers. Then Edward Meyers caught flashes of black on the outer edge of

the pines. It was a bear, but it quickly disappeared. Next the sounds of biting and twig snapping came from the pines, followed by complete silence.

Everyone listened in amazement. Finally, Bud, who was closest to the sounds, announced, "Hey, I found it over here." In an uncertain tone he continued, "He must have . . . the tracks lead . . . yeah, he did, he went under this large boulder. Look, it goes way back in there."

With only minutes remaining in the



THE GROUP used a bugle on its bear drives because the horn could be heard for great distances in the mountains. That helped keep the drivers in line and let the standers know how the drive was progressing.

season, Reed officially declared the hunt over.

As the tired crew made the long hike back up the mountain to the trucks, Reed said, "Look at that sunset, there's a tint of red in the sky. It's going to be a nice day tomorrow."

Then Charley said, "Remember the red sky this morning?" Reed nodded his head with a smile. "I'll remember that red horizon as long as I live. It brought a break in the cold weather, causing the bears to move around, and now three of them have our tags in their ears."

The Bear Pen Hollow hunters left camp with a storehouse of good memories to take back home, and when a red sky appears on the horizon again, they will be reminded of the magic in Penn's Woods one November morning.

Packing It In

A daypack carries essentials and niceties that can make outdoor recreation easier, more comfortable and potentially safer.

By Paul A. Matthews

IN A MATTER of seconds the deer were there, five of them rigid and alert not 40 yards away. Without getting off the stump, I pivoted to the right, put the crosshairs on the neck of a chunky button buck and pressed the trigger. A 350-grain bullet from my .45-70 did the rest.

Now the work started. I was hunting alone, as always, and I was better than half a mile from the nearest house. Seven or eight inches of snow blanketed the ground, snow that was crusted over just enough to make walking difficult but not enough to support the weight of the deer I had to drag.

Besides that, I had to consider how close my 70th birthday was and how much strenuous labor the old blood pump could handle.

From my knapsack I took a short length of nylon clothesline that had served as my drag rope for years. I looped it once around the deer's neck and once more around its nose so that when I pulled on the short cross-stick, the head of the deer lifted clear of the ground.

Then, from the zipper pocket on my knapsack, I extracted two heavy duty boot laces, each five feet long. I emptied my rifle and, after putting lens caps on the scope, laid the gun on top of the deer with the buttstock facing the head.

I circled the neck of the deer with one boot lace, tied it in a square knot, and then tied the two ends to the rifle, drawing it snugly against the deer's body. With the second boot lace tied around the flank and then secured to the rifle barrel, I laid the knapsack on top of the rifle and looped the pack's short carrying strap over the buttstock.

With both hands then free, I grasped the cross-stick attached to my rope and started dragging. An hour and a half later I was sitting in Al Segar's basement, eating a bowl of hot chili and swapping stories as to how each of us had connected that morning — just minutes apart and separated by only a few hundred yards of timber. In fact, we'd each taken a deer from the same group.



While the knapsack itself had nothing to do with the actual taking of the deer, I've found it to be about as essential to the serious hunter as his rifle and ammunition. I'm not talking about backpacks or pack frames, but a small, lightweight, water repellent daypack with one large compartment about 12 inches wide by 14 inches high by four inches deep, and a smaller outside zipper-closed compartment or pouch about 8x6x1 1/2.

Such an accessory weighs but a few ounces and has proved time and again to be the handiest "extra" I've ever carried in the woods.

Sure, I could've stuffed the boot laces in my pocket — if I had thought of them before I left the house. But by keeping them in the zipper pocket of my knapsack, I *always* have them with me, whether I'm hunting small game or deer or mushrooms, or whether I'm in my local woods or deep in the Adirondacks. Whenever I'm in the woods, the pack is with me.

A pair of 5-foot boot laces is just one item that's always in the knapsack. In addition to tying my rifle to the deer, I've used the laces to tie the feet of a wild turkey together for carrying it over my shoulder — with the aid of a stick shoved between the bird's feet. Pieces of the laces are good for tagging animals, too.

In a real emergency, the laces could also be used to tie down the corners of a plastic tarp or poncho for a shelter, or to secure the splints on a broken leg. Whatever the requirement, when a tie-down is needed, the boot laces serve the purpose.

Along with the boot laces, the zipper pocket also contains two candles (an

inch in diameter and four inches long); several kitchen matches in a resealable plastic sandwich bag (the matches waterproofed by dipping them in melted parafin); and a shrill whistle that can be heard at a considerable distance.

In addition to these few emergency items, I also carry two grocery store plastic bags — the kind with handles. These I stuff in the bottom of the large compartment; they weigh practically

nothing and take up little room.

In an emergency you can carry water in them. Hunters can use them to hold a deer's heart and liver or small game that has been skinned and cleaned in the field. Mushroom seekers find them invaluable for carrying their prizes.

The final item I always keep in the bottom of my knapsack is a package of disposable latex rubber gloves — available at drug stores. Get the kind that fit snugly. I paid \$1.99 for 10 gloves and always use

them when gutting out a deer.

Not only does this give some protection against rabies, it also helps prevent other infections should you have an open sore or wound on your hand while dressing out game.

Don't leave the gloves or any other litter in the woods. Turn them inside out as you remove them from your hands, and take them back to camp or home for proper disposal.

I said the latex gloves were the final emergency item. They aren't. Always carry a few folds of toilet paper in the zipper pocket. For this there is no good substitute.

The contents I've mentioned so far are the bare essentials. You can add to the list things like a small first aid kit and



Sure, I could've stuffed the laces in my pocket, but by keeping them in the emergency pouch of my knapsack they're always with me.

an emergency “space blanket,” both of which are good and potentially life-saving additions.

When I go afield looking for mushrooms, the only item I add to my bare essentials is my mushroom field guide, which I always keep wrapped in a small, clean plastic bag. I store the little book in the bottom of the knapsack, out of the way yet easily accessible for quick reference, and the bag preserves it for seasons to come. This advice is equally helpful to birders and others who carry field guides.

Small game, turkey and deer hunting impose other requirements, one of which is a virtual necessity: something warm and dry to sit on. For this purpose, I have found nothing better than a piece of flexible, half-inch closed-cell foam insulation measuring 10x13. It weighs about two ounces and can be folded in half to fit in the knapsack.

The closed-cell foam doesn't absorb water and provides excellent insulation for sitting on a frozen stump or cold, wet ground. I believe it is far superior to the plastic-covered, belt-suspended “hot seats.”

I cherish every moment of hunting, and I hate to leave the woods for lunch or any other reason — except to take game home or to call it quits at the end of the day.

When I head out in the morning, I don't want to have to go back to the house or car for lunch or coffee or whatever. I want to be free to wander in any direction for as long as I want.

Many a time in my younger days I've walked in the house long after dark, empty-handed but satisfied that for a few

hours I had divorced myself from the rat race. Further, I never could see the sense of leaving the deer woods for an hour and a half during the middle of the day.

All this, of course, means you have to be prepared for weather changes — usually temperature — between morning and late afternoon. You also have to take along something to eat and drink.

To accommodate weather changes, I often carry a spare hat and an extra pair of gloves in the knapsack. If the weather is mild when I start out, the spare items are for colder temperatures. If it's really

cold in the morning, I bring lighter gear for when it warms up. A spare hat and gloves weigh little and don't take up much room.

While food and drink are personal preferences, you don't want to wear yourself out by carrying a seven-course meal.

What you do want is something light and compact, yet high in energy and quick to satisfy the appetite. Many hunters carry a few candy bars for this purpose, and perhaps an apple or two. I prefer two homemade granola bars, which I carry in my shirt pockets, and a 10-ounce bottle of soft drink with

a twist-off cap that goes in my knapsack. With these I can hunt all day.

I eat my granola bars and drink my soft drink as a lunch at my regular lunchtime. The granola wrappers go back in my pocket and the empty soft drink bottle returns to the knapsack. Again, don't litter our woodlands.

If you want something to nibble on before and after lunch, purchase a few sticks of jerky or, better yet, make your own. This can be carried in a resealable plastic sandwich bag in your pocket. It



There is no substitute for a spare compass. If a lost hunter loses or breaks the one he normally carries, the spare will quickly become the best idea he's ever had.

weighs but an ounce or two and takes up little room.

Every year or so for the past dozen years I've managed to spend a few days deer and bear hunting in the Adirondack Mountains of New York. This is pristine hunting country — wild, rugged and unforgiving. In some areas a person could walk for days without crossing a road, and more than one person has disappeared forever in this wilderness.

I don't trifle with the Adirondacks. When I go into those woods, I put two extra granola bars in the bottom of my knapsack plus a *spare* compass and a heavy duty poncho.

While the poncho adds considerable weight, I much prefer it to the usual two-piece rain gear. Air circulation under the poncho is much freer than with rain gear and helps prevent sweating. More than that, a hunter can carry his gun under the poncho to protect it from driving rain.

Most important, the poncho can serve as a shelter, should a person have to

spend the night in the woods, simply by tying it down with boot laces.

The two extra granola bars provide the lost hunter with something to eat at night and again in the morning. As for the spare compass, there is no substitute for this instrument. If a hunter is lost and has the misfortune to lose or break the compass he normally carries, the spare will quickly become the best idea he's ever had.

I haven't always carried a knapsack. Years ago I took to the woods with pockets stuffed with sandwiches and all the necessary paraphernalia. But there were never enough pockets, and those that I had bulged to the point of discomfort and interfered with gun handling.

The little knapsack or daypack does away with all this. It lets me carry everything for a day in an out-of-the-way place, and it can easily be slipped off when I decide to sit. If you want to spend more and better hours in the woods enjoying the outdoors, pack it in — and don't forget to pack it out.

Homemade Granola Bars

Ingredients

- 2 cups of Cracklin' Oat Bran (crushed)
- 1½ cups 100% Natural Oat Cereal
- 1 package of condensed mincemeat
- 1 cup of chopped nuts
- 2/3 cup of butter or margarine (melted)
- 1/2 cup of firmly packed brown sugar
- 1/3 cup of honey, corn syrup or molasses
- 1 egg, beaten
- 1/2 tsp. of vanilla
- 1/2 tsp. of salt

Combine all ingredients and mix them thoroughly. Press the mixture firmly into a 10x13 cake pan that has been lined with aluminum foil and then well greased. Bake in a preheated oven at 325 degrees for 30 minutes. Lift the aluminum foil, along with the granola mixture, from the pan while it is still warm, and cut the mixture into 18 bars.

Remove each bar from the foil while it is still warm, and wrap individually in plastic wrap. While the bars are still warm, they have a tendency to crumble as they are removed from the pan. Gently press them together and they will firm up as they cool. If they are left on the aluminum foil to cool, the foil will stick to the bottom of the bar.





I COULDN'T BELIEVE I was scoping a bear in bear season. The bruin stopped about 70 yards away and looked around. At my first shot, the bear swung around and began running right toward me.

Just My Turn

By Darlene Antrim

BEING MARRIED to a dedicated bear hunter, I knew the only way I'd ever see my husband during bear season was to get a license and join him. He had been hunting bears for 20 years, and although I'd been a hunter for more than 10, 1990 was only my second bear season.

I still wasn't sure how I'd react if I saw a bear in hunting season. Once, in spring turkey season, a sow and her cub passed within an arm's length of me. My knees

shook so badly that my husband had to help me up — and were still shaking the next day.

Even before the sun rose on my second bear season I could tell it was going to be a beautiful day. It was chilly, but I knew the morning sun would soon warm things up. It started to get light soon after I got to my stand, and as the morning went on there seemed to be little activity.

Around 9:30 my husband came over to

see how I was doing. We talked a bit and then he went back to his stand.

A few minutes later I heard shooting in the direction of the next mountain; it seemed far away. But a short time later, as I was walking back and forth to get warm, something caught my eye.

I couldn't make it out at first, but suddenly I realized a bear was running out of the laurel. I shouldered my .300 Savage and looked through the scope — finding it hard to believe I was scoping a bear in bear season. The bruin stopped about 70 yards away and looked around.

At my first shot the bear swung completely around and started to run right at me. I was sure I'd hit him, but he kept coming. I fired again, and still he came.

I picked an opening in the trees and laurel in front of him, and when he hit it I concentrated on the crosshairs and pulled the trigger. He buckled under and collapsed only 25 yards away. My heart pounded loudly in my ears.

I watched him for a few minutes to make sure he was dead. He was so beautiful; the sun glistened off his shiny, jet-black fur. I fumbled for my whistle and signaled my husband, and he was by my side in moments. It was hard to tell which of us was

more excited, but I knew it was the biggest moment of my hunting career.

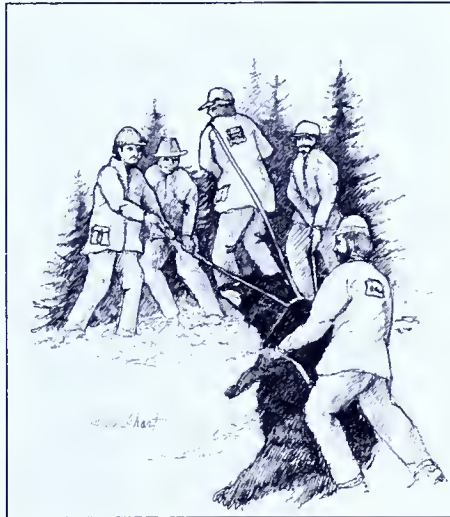
I waited by the bear while my husband went to get some help. He returned about an hour later with five men, and they dragged the animal 300 yards to a trail. We cut a limb from a fallen tree, lashed the bear to it, and they picked it up. The limb snapped in half. The guys got a bigger limb.

I shot the bear at 10 o'clock, but it wasn't until 3:30 that we got it out. If it wasn't for those five men we might still be dragging. When we reached the truck, at least 30 hunters were waiting for us. They had heard some woman had killed a big bear.

There were about 100 people at the Gaines check station, and, surprisingly, many of them had already heard about my success. I knew my bear was big,

but I never would've imagined it would tip the scales at 365 pounds. The biologist manning the check station estimated the live weight at 438 pounds. The icing on the cake came when the Commission measured my trophy last year. It scored 19-5.

I was fortunate to have had such a successful and memorable bear season. Many bear hunters never even get to see one during the season, let alone take such a trophy. I guess it was just my turn.



MY HUSBAND returned with five men, and they dragged the bear 300 yards to a trail. It took 5½ hours to get the bear out of the woods.

COVER PAINTING BY STEPHEN LEED

"WINTER BIRDS" is the 12th fine art print offered through the Working Together for Wildlife program. Since 1983, beginning with Ned Smith's "River Otters," artwork by such illustrious artists as Bob Sopchick, Gerry Putt and Laura Mark-Finberg have graced this program. As has been the case since 1986, each year's WTFW print is selected from entries by Pennsylvania artists. For the 1994 print, more than 40 artists submitted paintings of winter birds. And while the competition was keen, Steve's is truly an outstanding painting. Don't delay if you would like a fine art print of "Winter Birds." Indications are that this print will sell out quickly.

Anniversary Bucks



She was a hunter, he was not. But as their first anniversary approached, deer hunting took on a special importance for both of them.

IT WAS ONLY NATURAL that Becky Rumsey Russell became a hunter. When she was a tiny tot, her dad, Gary, bought her a small bow with suction cup-tipped arrows. Mimicking her father as he got ready for the deer season, Becky, too, would practice her skills.

Later, when she was 12 years old, her dad bought her the real thing, but it wasn't good enough for the elder Rumsey that Becky passed a hunter safety course.

"In order for me to hunt with him I had to put 10 consecutive shots into a 10-inch pie plate at 20 yards," she said. Gary didn't want his daughter to cripple a deer.

Becky's older sister, Tina, was also a hunter, but she limited her time afield to small game. For Becky, the chance to go after deer with her father was all the incentive she needed to keep practicing.

"Maybe it's because Tina couldn't go that Dad encouraged me so much to hunt with him," Becky said. "Besides, this would be a chance for Dad and me to be alone," she said. "I really looked forward to our first deer hunt together."

After passing her father's test, Becky was allowed to hunt after her 13th birthday. The first day of archery season that year found Becky and her dad near Dyers Pond in Bradford County. Gary had scouted the area extensively and discovered a crossing where he and his daughter could keep watch near a clearing.

By Carl W. McCardell

The crisp morning nip in the air quickly vanished as a warm October sun began to rise. As the morning wore on, Becky began to stare at the distant pond on her uncle's farm. The water had a hypnotic effect. But the sound of crunching leaves drew her attention to the fencerow.

Three deer came through the small opening only eight yards from her. Immediately, the alert animals began prancing in order to make the unfamiliar object move. Before Becky had a chance to do anything, the deer bounded away. The rest of the day was uneventful, but there had been enough excitement to entice her back the next weekend.

It wasn't until the final hour of the second Saturday of the season that Becky again came within shooting range of a whitetail. This time the deer had no idea a hunter was in its territory. Drawing back the bow as she had done so many times before, Becky at last released an arrow at a deer. After realizing her shot was good, she could hardly contain herself.

Gary was just as excited as Becky, maybe even more. Only a short tracking walk was in order because the button buck lay on the leaves within a hundred yards of her stand. And so it was that Becky killed her first deer.

At 14, Becky shot her second, this one with a .30-30 her grandfather had given her. She made a heart shot on a 6-point at 50 yards. The stand also proved to be a productive spot the following year. On the second day of the regular buck season, she shot a beautiful 9-pointer.

When she was 16, it took Becky until the last hour of the last day of buck season to connect. The ground was covered by nearly three feet of snow. Gary had placed

her by a large tree in a small ravine. She was able to watch both fields that bordered the thicket.

As Gary went to find his stand, all Becky could think of was going back to her uncle's warm house. The frigid temperatures had chilled her to the bone. But soon after her Dad had disappeared from view, a huge buck suddenly raced across one of the open fields. Trying to move her cold hands in order to take a shot, Becky found herself fumbling with the rifle.

Finally, she was able to fire once, missing the large deer cleanly. She scolded herself, but suddenly a five-pointer ran out, following the same path as the first one. The .30-30 barked and Becky had her fourth whitetail. Becky connected on yet another buck in 1986 when she was 17. It was her second with a bow, and she took it in the first 15 minutes of the season.

But when Becky turned 19, thoughts of hunting seemed to all but disappear. Tim Russell, her boyfriend for a couple years, asked her to marry him.

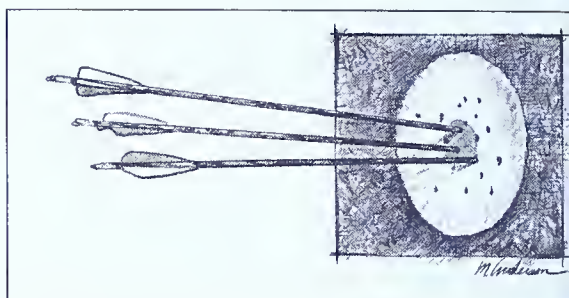
Tim was not a hunter. No one in his family hunted. They weren't "antis." They just didn't hunt.

His association with the Rumseys, however, kindled an interest in the sport. After constantly hearing the details of the family's exploits, he had to find out what all the excitement was about. After all, it had to be pretty important to take a woman from her newly married husband right after the honeymoon.

The fact that Gary Rumsey is a taxidermist certainly added to Tim's curiosity. Seeing the racks in Gary's shop gave Tim a desire to get one of his own. He also had a desire to acquire some of the delicious meat Becky's mother had often prepared.

When the archery season of 1990 rolled around, Tim Russell was as excited as any first-time hunter could be. His enthusiasm was contagious and had all the Rumsey hunters in an upbeat mood.

Gary was the first one to connect on a



BEFORE BECKY could begin hunting, she had to be able to put 10 consecutive shots in a pie plate 20 yards away.

deer that year. He took a handsome 6-pointer. The fresh venison spurred on the rest of the family, but neither Becky, her brother Jason nor Tim managed to score.

As they prepared to celebrate their first anniversary the following year, Tim and Becky had high hopes of each getting a deer.

When the first day of buck season arrived, Tim had to work. The day passed slowly as he thought of his wife. Would she get a buck, he wondered.

Becky hunted in Chester County that day while her brother had traveled to their uncle's farm in Bradford County. Coincidentally, the two shot nearly identical bucks — about 175 miles apart. Each deer had a 3-point antler on one side and a broken antler on the other.

Tim was able to hunt only once during the week, and he didn't see much. When Saturday arrived, it was decided that he would hunt out of the same stand where Becky had gotten her deer on Monday. Becky and Jason planned to put on a short drive for Tim the first thing in the morning.

But it turned out he didn't need their help. Tim was on stand only a few minutes when a lone buck sauntered by. Three shots later, Tim had his first buck.

Tim now felt even more a part of Becky's family. Although he and his wife already had much in common, they now had an interest which would strengthen their relationship even more — a love of deer hunting and their anniversary bucks.

Taking Unlawful Advantage

Much to the chagrin of law-abiding sportsmen and women, some people bait areas to attract bears and other animals in order to 'hunt' them.

By John Wasserman

WCO, Clinton County

PHOTOS BY HAL KORBER

WHEN THE PHONE rang at nine o'clock on Thanksgiving evening, I figured it was important. "John," said the voice on the other end of the line, "if the man who held the light on a bear that another man shoots goes on to report the violation, do you have to arrest the man who held the light?"

The caller was Buckshot, a man who had given me more than one valuable tip in the past. He said a young man in a camp near his had been involved in the illegal killing of a bear and wanted to confess. He was willing to testify against the person who pulled the trigger, but only if he was protected from prosecution.

Bear season had ended the day before and I knew nothing about the violation, so it seemed like a good deal to me. We arranged to meet the next day. Before hanging up, Buckshot told me the bear was a cub

and had been shot from a doorway the night before opening day.

After hanging up, I began reviewing check station reports, separating those of cubs killed the first day in the township where Buckshot's camp was located. Then I checked the names of successful hunters against a Bureau of Forestry roster of camp owners. It wasn't long before I had a suspect — a man who owned a camp less than a mile from Buckshot's place had checked in a 65-pound bear on opening day.

The next morning I asked Deputy Pete Rathmell to check the suspect's camp. He found corn scattered on the ground and a



HUNTING over bait or taking advantage of it is illegal and unethical; those who commit such acts are responsible for making the sport of hunting look bad.

tree stump soaked with honey behind the cabin. This information would be very useful if the informant got cold feet.

While I waited for Buckshot and the informant, I began thinking about the bear season violations we'd investigated. Prior to the season, I was aware of many bear baiting locations in my 450-square-mile district, and I'd planned a law enforcement sweep at first light on opening day with several deputies and supervisors.

Before sunrise on opening day, I met with Deputy Tom Schmoke and PGC photographer Hal Korber, and we set off for one of several bait areas near Pottersdale. Minutes before the opening hour, we surprised a party of 25 hunters lining up for a drive. I knew corn had been dumped in the immediate area behind some camps only a stone's throw from where we stood. I told the drive captain they couldn't hunt here.

He acted surprised and claimed he didn't know about the bait. But their camp, which was heavily baited, was no more than 500 yards away and in the direction they planned to drive. Had we arrived while the push was in progress, we would have been issuing citations.



We then went to their camp to look for stragglers. People who bait often begin their hunts several hundred yards from camps. They work toward their cabins — knowing full well a bear will frequently be close to the food supply, especially at first light. And there's nearly always one or two folks who can't or won't walk far from camp and can be found a short distance from the bait. These are what we refer to as stragglers.

As soon as Tom, Hal and I pulled into the camp, I spotted a large pile of corn, apples, meat scraps, beef lungs and lard about 25 yards away.

A man came out from behind the cabin and walked toward us, and I told him it was unlawful for anyone to hunt in the vicinity of the camp or to take advantage of the bait there.

"Oh, that's just some table scraps and stuff," he replied defensively.

I said it was the "stuff" I was concerned with, and I asked him if there were any camp members hunting in the immediate area. He said there weren't. As he turned to walk back to the cabin, I noticed a hunting license and a bear license on his back. Glancing toward the cabin, I saw a rifle leaning against the wall beside the back door.

The man denied standing outside with the rifle, and while I knew what he'd been up to, I had no evidence. I gave him a stiff warning about the gun and we left. But as we pulled away, I had a hunch.

I told Tom to walk through the woods behind the camp, and he grabbed a portable radio and headed out while Hal and I circled the area in the patrol car.

Seeing no one, we drove out to meet Tom. He was still working his way toward a power line behind the camp, so we parked nearby and waited. Within a few minutes, Tom radioed that he'd found someone hunting on the power line.

WCO WASSERMAN, right, and Northcentral Region Director Willis Sneath check a bait site. Hunting over bait is a major problem that the Commission, and hunters, take seriously.

We found Tom standing next to a man who dwarfed him in size. Tom is 6-4 and weighs 280, but the hunter beside him exceeded 500. He'd been sitting on the power line, obviously attempting to ambush any bear that crossed it to get to the bait pile only 150 yards away.

The guy was clearly taking advantage of the bait, so I cited him for it. The Game and Wildlife Code states it is unlawful to "take advantage of" any bait while hunting. No minimum or maximum distance from baited areas is specified; in some instances, a hunter can be hundreds of yards away and still be intentionally taking advantage of bait.

Bears will travel great distances to get to a baited area, and they'll use the same trails each time. The trail soon becomes heavily worn and exhibits clear impressions of bear prints. Bears tend to step in their own tracks, or another bear's prints, each time they walk a trail.

I've found paw impressions six inches deep on some frequently traveled trails. An unscrupulous hunter can position himself anywhere along such an easily identifiable path, even a great distance away, and be in violation.

After finishing up at the power line, we headed for a camp that had been bringing in stale doughnuts by the truckload. Several bears were coming in each night. The property owner assured us he wasn't a bear hunter and no one from his camp hunted anywhere in the vicinity.

"People come from 50 miles away to look at the bears," he said proudly. After I explained the problem he was creating, he assured me that next year he would stop feeding by the end of September. Although I would've preferred that he stop altogether, I was willing to take what I could get.

Feeding causes a variety of problems, both for bears and for people. Under nor-

mal circumstances, there's no reason to fear bears. They're usually docile and will run at the first sight or scent of a human.

But a bear that is routinely fed soon learns to associate people with food, and as a result it loses its fear of humans. A hand-fed bear is even worse, sometimes roaming through towns looking for handouts or approaching campers, fishermen and hikers. This can be extremely unnerving, to say the least.

I remember watching one such bear lying on a porch, eating garbage. It was leaning up against the door and refused to move even when the door was opened against it. The bear actually prevented the homeowner from going out his front door.

I have investigated incidents where bears have wandered into open garages, torn down porch doors, smashed fences, broken windows and attempted to crawl into

homes. Some bears will even kill dogs that get in their way and growl at humans who approach them while they're eating. Such a bear is dangerous and may wind up being killed, all because people fed it.

Enroute to our next spot, Region Director Willis Sneath called me on the radio. He'd been working in the Dry Run area, posing as a hunter, and had just apprehended someone hunting near bait. The bait (corn, fish, chickens, pheasants, apples, grain and molasses) was hidden in a depression under a stand of small hemlock trees in an old clearcut.

I had inspected the area several times before the season, and had kept a written and photographic record each time the site had been baited. I also photographed claw marks and droppings and other evidence of bear feeding. Such a record is useful in the courtroom to indicate a continued pattern of baiting, and to prove bears used the bait.

Then we got still another call, this one

Some bears will kill dogs that get in their way and growl at humans who approach them. Such a bear may have to be killed, all because people fed it.

from Law Enforcement Supervisor Warren "Quig" Stump and Deputy Joe Brookens. They'd apprehended a hunter on one of the bait areas they were working.

We met Quig and Joe within 15 minutes and briefly reviewed the case. The bait, mostly corn, had been placed within 20 yards of a camp and had been heavily used by bears.

The camp owner was found standing on watch behind the camp, 75 yards from the corn. From his stand, he could easily shoot any bear approaching the bait. Numerous corn-filled droppings in the area told us that bears had been coming in.

A guest at the camp was watching from farther away. He was positioned on a pipeline where he would have a clear shot at crossing bears. Quig and I agreed that both men should be cited.

By the time we arrived at Dry Run, Willis had finished his investigation and had released the suspect after issuing a field receipt. Willis had cited the man for hunting the bait pile in the clearcut I'd discovered that summer. When he searched the suspect's vehicle, he found the same unusual green sacks of grain that were around the bait pile.

I later learned the same man had killed a bear in the Dry Run area the year before. We were fortunate to get this guy—I found out about the baiting site through an anonymous tip. I only wish I could thank the person who gave me the information.

Next we headed for the bear check station near Renovo. Before the season I'd drawn up a list of camps that had been putting out food, and I'd given a copy of it to people at the station. We learned few bears had been checked so far, and no hunters from camps on my list had been in.

Many of these camps "feed" only during the hunting season and do little for wildlife during January through March, when conditions are most severe. While it is not unlawful to feed wildlife in the fall, there's no need for it. In fact, most experts question its value even in late winter, except, perhaps, for turkeys during exceptionally deep and long-lasting snowfalls.

Late in the afternoon, Deputy Rathmell met us at the check station. After a review of the day's events, Tom headed for the Pottersdale area to check some bait areas we couldn't get to earlier.

In the meantime, Pete, Hal and I traveled out to the Tamarack Swamp. A cabin at the edge of the swamp had placed some beef tallow and clams beside a corn feeder within 25 yards of the back door. I'd documented bears visiting the site quite frequently just prior to the season.

It was close to sunset when we got there. Within moments we came upon a man

BAITING — THE LAW

THE FOLLOWING is found in the Game and Wildlife Code, Section 2308, subsection A(8):

"General rule. — Except as otherwise provided in this title, it is unlawful for any person to hunt or aid, abet, assist or conspire to hunt any game or wildlife through the use of:

"Any artificial or natural bait, hay, grain, fruit, nut, salt, chemical, mineral or other food as an enticement for game or wildlife, regardless of kind and quantity, or take advantage of any such area or food or bait prior to 30 days after the removal of such material and its residue."

The law does not affect "normal or accepted farming practices, habitat management practices, oil and gas drilling, mining, forest management activities or other commercial or industrial practices."

The penalty for hunting over bait is \$200 and can carry up to one year's revocation of hunting and trapping privileges. Killing, wounding or attempting to kill (through shooting) brings with it possible revocations of three years for bear, and two for deer and turkey. Those who kill game over bait are fined \$800 for bear, \$500 for deer and \$200 for turkey.

While the agency recently issued guidelines allowing commercially produced scents and lures for deer, those items are illegal for bear.

hunting near the bait. He was a guest at the cabin and knew bears had been coming there to feed. Because he was clearly taking advantage of the bait, he was violating the law — even though he himself did not put out the bait. He paid a heavy fine, and his hunting and trapping privileges were revoked.

A knock at the door brought me back to the present. Buckshot had arrived, and he'd brought the young man with him.

"Just relax," I said. "Tell me how 'Mr. Smith' killed the cub."

Somewhat surprised I knew who'd done the shooting, he began to talk. Smith had been putting out corn and had saturated a tree stump behind the camp with honey.

At about 1:30 in the morning before the season opened, Smith woke the young man — who was new at the camp and a bit afraid of Smith. He said two bears were at the honey, and he wanted the young man to hold a flashlight on them while he shot.

When Smith killed one bear the other bear scurried up a tree. Smith then handed the gun to the young man, but even though he was intimidated by Smith, he wouldn't shoot. Later that day, Smith checked the bear; the next day he took it — a cub — to a taxidermist for a full body mount.

After I had the young man's assurance that he'd testify in court, I called Smith.

"This is Wildlife Conservation Officer Wasserman calling," I said. "I want to talk to you about the bear you shot. It seems there are a few problems with the circumstances."

"What are you talking about?" Smith shouted into the phone. "I took it to the check station and they tagged it as a legal kill. There're no problems."

"A young man you know just left my office," I said, playing the trump card. The line seemed to go dead — total silence. Finally, in a somber tone, Smith asked how much the fine was going to be.

He was fined \$1,000, his hunting and

ONCE BEARS begin using a baited area, they create well-used and readily identifiable trails into and out of the site — which some unscrupulous people take advantage of.

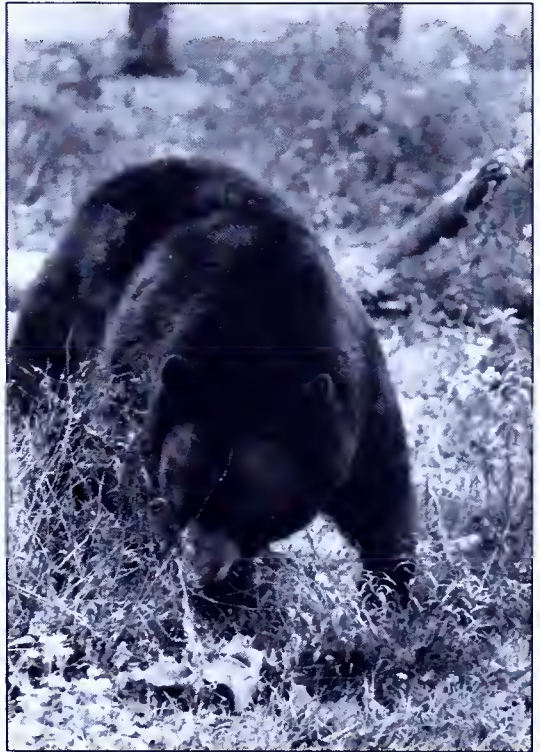
trapping privileges were revoked for several years, and we confiscated his "trophy" bear.

This brought to a close the 1992 bear season, one of the worst I'd seen in terms of baiting. But baiting is a big problem each year, and you can be sure that conservation officers throughout the state have been investigating bait sites for the upcoming season.

And don't think baiting is limited to bears. The hunting of deer and turkeys through the use of bait seems to be on the rise. As in the case of bears, the feeding of game during hunting seasons is the root of most baiting violations.

In 1987, as game laws were being codified, the Commission tried to prohibit these feeding activities. The attempt failed, but perhaps someday a new bill will be introduced. It's certainly an issue that should be addressed, one that will benefit wildlife and one that has the support of the vast majority of sportsmen and women.

In the meantime, me and my fellow officers — with the help of concerned hunters — will do everything we can to stop this unscrupulous practice.



Making the Grade

Work and deer hunting don't mix. Just ask the teacher who thought she could mark some papers while on stand.

By Doris Nagel

ONLY A TEACHER could appreciate the mess I was in. The first Saturday of deer season was a beautiful, sunny but breezy day. I was prepared for a great day of deer hunting, but I couldn't have imagined the excitement about to befall me.

Because I had lots of school work tugging at my coattails, begging me to stay home and work, I decided to take along 185 fourth-grade papers to grade while I was on stand. It sure beat worrying about catching up on my work.

The first stand I sat in proved unsatisfactory because the wind was blowing so hard I started to get motion sickness. A small hilltop maple is no place to spend a windy day. I climbed down and trekked across my

father's recently harvested cornfield to my second choice, a stately white oak that wouldn't bow to any wind.

When I got there I looked back across the field I'd just crossed and saw two fluorescent orange spots on the ground — my spare hat and vest. I had to go back.

After retrieving the items, I returned to the tree, and trying to be as safe as possible, I made two trips up the ladder. The first load consisted of a thermos, an extra hat and my canvas book bag containing my grade book and the papers. I went back down the ladder, and as I bent over to pick up my .30-30 I heard the most unusual flapping sound. I glanced up just in time to see hundreds of flapping white birds.



I GLANCED UP just in time to see hundreds of flapping white birds, except they weren't birds. Nearly 200 fourth-grade papers took to the air.

FINALLY, relieved, tired and torn, I climbed the ladder to do some deer hunting; I stuffed the bedraggled papers into the bag.

Well, they weren't exactly birds. Despair swept over me as I watched my papers sail through the air. Some got caught in the uppermost branches of the surrounding trees, others became tangled in the barbs of the blackberry briars. Many tumbled and danced across the neighbor's bare field as if they were racing to see which one could reach the other side first.

I saw others swimming in a small run that crossed the thicket, one so impenetrable I think even deer avoid it.

"That's one way to get rid of a lot of work," I said aloud. But the papers were too important; I wanted to go over them with my students to prepare them for an upcoming test.

I began collecting them, gingerly picking papers out of the mud ditch, pulling them quickly from low branches before the wind whipped them onto higher ones, shaking the smaller saplings to knock the papers to the ground and grab them before they blew away. It was hardly what anyone would call deer hunting.

After I retrieved the nearby papers, I was faced with a dilemma. I couldn't decide whether to run across the neighbor's field and grab the papers still blowing out there or whether I should try to get the ones out of the tall oak. I opted for the field first. It must've been some sight, me scampering across the field snatching up papers.

Back at the tree, I found a really long stick and began poking. As I freed each paper with a slight jab, the ferocious wind was kind enough to blow it onto another branch. Eventually, though, I'd battled branches, brush and saplings to the point I figured I had the last of the papers.

I wearily began gathering the piles I'd stashed under rocks for safekeeping. These I placed under a large boulder. At last, for the first time that day, I believed I'd beaten the wind. I carried my .30-30 up to the tree stand and carefully laid it on the flat platform.



I climbed back down to get the papers, and I watched in amazement as a lone paper flew through the air. It landed, then twirled and tumbled over the field out of sight. I ran after it, and with a desperate grab I had it — the last one.

Returning to the large boulder that was so bravely guarding the papers, I crouched down and carefully rolled it aside. I quickly snatched up the tattered and wrinkled works of my students.

Finally, relieved, tired and torn, I climbed the ladder to do some hunting. When I got in the stand I stuffed the bedraggled papers into the canvas bag. No point in trying to grade them now; I'd lost my reading glasses during the search.

I was relieved that at least no one was around to witness the spectacle. But then I looked across the field and saw a fluorescent orange suit about 200 yards away. So much for going unnoticed. That hunter probably still tells stories about what he saw that day.

To top off the day I began to write down the experience (in red ink, so I could see it without my glasses) only to look up just in time to see buck run across the cornfield. He was out of sight so fast I was left with only my pen in hand.

Well, I salvaged my papers but missed my chance at a buck. But as any teacher will tell you, "It's all in a day's work."



The Best News of All

It was 12 long years before the author shot his first buck. To cap the pride and excitement he experienced, he discovered it would always feel this way.

FIRST LIGHT is always a magic time, one full of anticipation. I was hoping today would be the day. I'd been on stand almost an hour, waiting for the sun to brighten the hemlock and hardwoods hollow before me.

I needed that hour to finish up my preparations for buck season. I had plenty of shells and food for the day; I like to spend the time just before dawn relaxing my mind and opening up my senses, becoming part of the forest. For me, buck hunting is a spiritual quest, and it had been a long journey; I'd hunted 12 years without bagging a buck.

Those 12 seasons had been well spent. I made quite a few mistakes and I learned from them. My father and brothers

By Andrew J. Hahn

are not hunters, so as a kid I tagged along with neighbors, uncles and cousins at every opportunity. And like probably every young hunter, I got excited before each and every hunt; October through December was like an endless night before Christmas.

When I was old enough, I began to do a lot of hunting by myself. Hunting alone allows me to move at an unhurried pace, with nobody to interrupt my thoughts. I enjoy hunting with friends, but I like to get out by myself sometimes because the sport is so often an individual experience.

On this particular morning, two of my cousins were hunting the same hollow, although our stands were so far apart that I might as well have been hunting alone. I'd cleared my carefully chosen stand of fallen, noisy leaves, and my backpack and pockets were stuffed with everything from candy bars to a drag rope and extra clothes. I figured I was ready for anything that might happen, even though I'd never so much as fired at a buck.

I had come close twice, though. One time I was still-hunting through a wooded patch fringing a farm when I suddenly found myself looking into the eyes of a corn-fed 8-

point only 30 yards away. He was in thick brush, which kept me from seeing much besides his eyes and horns. I could've risked a shot by guessing where his chest was, but safety and my principles wouldn't let me do it.

I stood frozen in my tracks as we stared at each other for a minute or so. I couldn't decide whether to wait him out, try to pick a shot through the branches, or take a few steps to try to see around the brush. I once had a professor who said not deciding is to have somebody else decide for you, and before long the buck made my choice for me. He calmly strolled away, keeping the thicket between us until he vanished out of range. I never even raised my rifle.

Another time I was shivering through an ice storm on the second day of buck season when a deer came angling down the ridge toward me. A peek through the scope revealed a rack of about six points, and I tried to control my pulse rate as he slowly moved into range.

It was the perfect opportunity. The buck was walking slowly and I would have a clear shot from my tree stand. A tree branch even served as a solid rest to keep my gun steady.

Just a few more steps and . . . and two does burst from the brush behind the buck and started him running down the hillside. I followed him in the scope, hoping he would stop or at least slow down, but he kept it in high gear until he disappeared into the streamside hemlocks.

I put the safety back on and asked myself why I hadn't chanced a shot at the running deer. I didn't pull the trigger because I prefer to place my shots with precision. I don't believe in chancing or risking any shot — whether it's at running game or a whitetail behind a brushpile.

In more than a decade of deer seasons I had yet to break the spell. When I was in college, a friend and I decided we wouldn't shave until we shot a deer. If I

had kept my word on that one, my beard would be tickling my kneecaps by now.

I remembered with a smile an old man I'd met one opening day on a game lands in Westmoreland County. He said he was over 70 years old and had been hunting since before the second World War.

He proudly showed me his first buck, a four-inch spike he had just dropped with a 16-gauge pumpkin ball. I have never seen a more highly prized trophy. I admired the old-timer's enthusi-

I COULDN'T decide whether to wait him out, pick a shot through the branches, or take a few steps to try to see around the brush. While I debated, the buck slipped away.



asm and persistence, but at the same time I silently hoped I wouldn't have to wait so long for my first deer.

The morning light of Cambria County began waking the woods, the brightness slowly penetrating the branches. For some reason my eyes were drawn to a particular patch of woods slightly uphill. I saw movement. Legs. Four legs. Four deer legs. This could be it. The four deer legs slowly and silently picked their way downhill, pausing frequently.

Then I saw the head, barely discernible because the animal kept it down as it moved through the brush —the way they say a nervous buck behaves during deer season.

My heart pounded wildly and my arms trembled. My knees began to shake, and I started to panic, thinking I wouldn't be able to hold the rifle steady enough to make a good shot.

Spiritual quests are full of stories about visions and apparitions that seem to materialize and vanish without a trace, frustrating the mere mortals who pursue them. The deer melted soundlessly into the shadows of early dawn before I was able to tell if it was a buck or a doe. Was it ever really there?

Several minutes later I was still trembling, wondering what would happen when my chance came to take a shot. I took a few deep breaths and told myself to calm down.

As the woods brightened I began my opening day routine of watching chickadees and red squirrels, and being snapped out of daydreams by far-off rifle cracks. I

was particularly amused by a gray squirrel that inched up nervously — in short bursts and quick halts — to sniff the thermos of coffee at my feet.

I'd just knelt down to take a sip of

coffee when I caught a glimpse of the hind end of a deer disappear behind a clump of trees. I quickly set the coffee down, but the deer didn't reappear from the other side. The second sighting of the day and all I had to show for it was another case of tremors.

My cousins had been correct when they figured the hollow

wouldn't get much pressure on opening day; by 9:30 I hadn't seen another hunter. It was still early, though, and my confidence in my stand remained high. I wondered whether my cousins were seeing anything, and I thought about my college buddy in Clarion County. Had he ended his season yet?

Another movement caught me daydreaming, and I saw deer flanks slip out of view at the same place the last one had vanished a half-hour earlier. No coffee cup to distract me this time. And as the deer emerged I was utterly amazed when I saw it had antlers. It couldn't be, I thought. The deer was crossing 30 yards away.

This is it, I told myself, raising the rifle and cocking the hammer. Before I could step back to brace against the tree, the buck turned and began walking toward me. Through the scope I saw him suddenly stop and give me a wide-eyed stare. My only option was to place the crosshairs at the base of his neck.

I remember wishing the target area

As the woods brightened, I began my opening day routine of watching chickadees and red squirrels, and being snapped out of daydreams by far-off rifle cracks.

wasn't so small and for time to rest the rifle, but I held the gun solidly against my shoulder, took a deep breath, and fired an offhand shot.

After hearing the rifle crack I fully expected to see the deer bound away like one more vision in my fruitless quest. Instead I heard only the sound of something running through the leaves. Why can't I see it? I thought. There was still time for a second shot. Where was the deer?

An instant later I realized the buck had fallen into a shallow gully and its final thrashing sounded like it was running away. A clean, one-shot kill — the way it should be, the way I always wanted it to be.

The bullet's exit hole in the ribs seemed small. I looked at the buck's neck and the front of the chest, but I couldn't find the entry hole. Evidently the buck had turned and jumped at the last second, just as I squeezed the trigger, and the bullet had entered the ribs for a lung shot. Despite all my preparations, a bit of luck made a big difference.

After 12 years, I'd finally dropped a deer. The spell was broken, the feat accomplished. I sat down to enjoy the euphoria for a while and admire the buck. Although the rack wasn't big, it sported eight points.

The deer was well-fed and in fine condition, which meant lots of steaks and roasts for the winter. All the time and effort that had culminated in this moment instilled in me a genuine appreciation for my quarry.

While I began to field-dress the deer, I couldn't shake the feeling that it wasn't happening and that soon the alarm would ring and jolt me out of a dream. I couldn't stop smiling.

I'd mentally rehearsed the field-dressing process so many times that I did it like an old pro, complete with a plastic



AFTER 12 YEARS I'd finally bagged a deer. The spell was broken, the feat accomplished. All the time and effort I'd invested in buck hunting instilled a genuine appreciation for my quarry.

bag for the heart and liver and an old rag to clean my hands. I got out a little pencil to fill out the tag and then fastened it to the deer's ear.

My cousin Larry showed up, and after a few hundred yards of dragging we saw Chuck. He, too, had come to investigate the shooting. Both of them had tagged many deer, and they welcomed me to the club with handshakes and congratulations. The drag out of the woods was almost easy.

The dreamlike feeling continued through the afternoon as I put on slow, quiet drives for my cousins. I stopped often to look around, smile and inhale the woodsy air. It felt strange to be sneaking along on opening day without the weight of my rifle.

My wife was thrilled when she heard the news and so were my parents. They practically threw a party for me. A few days later I called an old friend to tell him I'd bagged my first deer.

"It's a great feeling, isn't it?" he said. Then he gave me the best news of all: "Let me tell you, it doesn't change, no matter how many deer you get."

Analysis of an ACCIDENT

A group of medical experts studied the state's turkey hunting accidents. What they found may provide some insight into the problem.

By Joseph L. Smith, M.D.

TURKEY HUNTING safety has been a major concern, even a hotly contested subject, in recent years because of increasing accident rates and the Game Commission's attempt to make the sport as safe as possible.

Although new fluorescent orange regulations enacted a year ago brought about a dramatic drop in accidents, there are still

some who believe the "quality of the hunt" is more important than safety.

Unlike most people associated with the sport, my colleagues and I see firsthand the devastation these accidents cause. And just as we would with any type of accident, we try to determine the causes, hoping to identify ways to reduce them.

We studied all the turkey hunting acci-

dents that occurred from 1982 through 1991. During this 10-year period there were 311 reported turkey hunting accidents; 83 in the spring seasons, 228 in the fall. In total, 19 were fatal accidents; 5 in the spring, 14 in the fall (Table 1).

Annual accident rates for spring seasons range from 1.8 to 8.9 per 100,000 hunters, and average 3.7. For the fall, they range from 3.1 to 16.2 and average 7.3. Fatality rates per one million spring turkey hunters range from 0 to 9.3 and average 2.2 for the spring seasons. For the fall they range from 0 to 12.7 and average 4.4. The higher fall results may be due to the increased numbers of hunt-

Table 1. Annual turkey hunting accident and fatality rates, 1982-1991

SPRING			No. of Hunters	ACCIDENTS per 1,000 hunters	FATALITIES per 1 million hunters
Accidents	Fatalities				
1982	8	0	279,948	2.9	0.0
1983	7	0	255,982	2.7	0.0
1984	6	1	209,717	2.9	4.7
1985	8	2	214,31	3.7	9.3
1986	10	0	246,039	4.0	0.0
1987	8	0	206,039	3.9	0.0
1988	8	0	226,008	3.5	0.0
1989	4	1	224,691	1.8	4.4
1990	8	1	191,442	4.2	5.5
1991	16	0	179,202	8.9	0.0
Total	83	5	2,233,399	3.7	2.2
FALL			No. of Hunters	ACCIDENTS per 1,000 hunters	FATALITIES per 1 million hunters
Accidents	Fatalities				
1982	23	2	433,762	5.3	4.6
1983	13	0	367,657	3.5	0.0
1984	10	1	322,347	3.1	3.1
1985	17	1	298,055	5.7	3.3
1986	25	1	336,225	7.4	2.9
1987	25	1	282,761	8.8	3.5
1988	21	3	300,055	7.0	9.9
1989	19	0	296,139	6.4	0.0
1990	38	3	234,911	16.2	12.7
1991	37	2	252,210	14.7	7.9
Total	228	14	3,124,122	7.3	4.4

ers afield that time of year and because turkeys of either sex are legal.

What's alarming is that the annual accident rates for both seasons and the fall fatality rates increased over the 10-year period, indicating the turkey hunting accidents were a growing problem.

By far the major cause of turkey hunting accidents is one hunter shooting another in mistake for game (Table 2). This accounted for nearly 80 percent of spring accidents and more than 70 percent of those in the fall. Overall, excluding self-inflicted accidents, mistake for game made up a full three-fourths of turkey accidents.

The other causes of turkey hunting accidents are, in descending order, victim in line of fire or struck by stray or ricochet shots, firearm handling errors (mishandled/dropped a firearm and/or discharged), and a firearm discharging when a hunter slipped or fell. Of the 11 self-inflicted injuries, 10 were due to firearm handling errors.

Requiring some sort of hunter education course for turkey hunters has been proposed by some as a solution to the turkey hunting safety problem. Accident records show, however, that it's not the new, inexperienced or untrained hunters who are involved in the accidents. On average, people involved in turkey hunting accidents have more than 20 years hunting experience, and roughly half have completed a hunter education course, required of all hunters since 1982.

The location of the accidents; weather, light, and cover conditions; and accident victims' positions when shot were similar for both seasons. Not surprisingly, most occurred in the woods, on a clear day, and the victim was stationary.

In the accidents

where the distance between victim and offender was known, almost 80 percent of the spring and nearly 70 percent of the fall accident victims were shot within 50 yards. For the fatal accidents, there was a seasonal difference. In three of the four fatal spring accidents, victims were killed with a shotgun at distances less than 50 yards from the shooters.

Just the opposite occurred for the fall seasons. In three-quarters of the fall fatalities, victims were shot with a rifle at distances greater than 50 yards, and a full 75 percent of fatal mistake for game accidents in the fall involved rifles. Ten of the 12 people killed by rifles were shot at distances greater than 50 yards.

None of the 66 hunters shot in mistake for game during the spring was wearing fluorescent orange clothing. The vast majority, more than 70 percent, wore camouflage. In fall mistake for game accidents, nearly 80 percent of the victims wore camo. Fewer than 5 percent wore fluorescent orange, and of the eight people wearing orange when shot, only three were visible to the shooter.

In 1982, turkey hunting accidents accounted for 17 percent of all hunting accidents in Pennsylvania; by 1991 they accounted for 39 percent. In 1982, the per-

Table 2. Causes of Turkey Hunting Accidents

SPRING	SELF-INFLECTED		INFLECTED BY OTHERS	
	fatal	nonfatal	fatal	nonfatal
Causes				
Shot for Game	0	0	3	63
In Line of Fire	0	0	1	10
Stray or Ricochet	0	0	0	1
Mishandled/dropped firearm	1	1	0	1
Accidental Discharge	0	0	0	0
Hunter Slipped or Fell	0	0	0	2
Total	1	1	4	77
FALL	SELF-INFLECTED		INFLECTED BY OTHERS	
	fatal	nonfatal	fatal	nonfatal
Causes				
Shot for Game	0	0	12	152
In Line of Fire	0	0	0	34
Stray or Ricochet	0	0	0	16
Mishandled/dropped firearm	1	3	0	1
Accidental Discharge	1	3	0	2
Hunter Slipped or Fell	0	1	0	2
Total	2	7	12	207

DR. SMITH and his associates quantified what many already knew — turkey hunters are not properly identifying their targets.

centage of turkey hunting accidents classified as “shot in mistake for game” was 61 percent; by 1991 it had reached 80 percent.

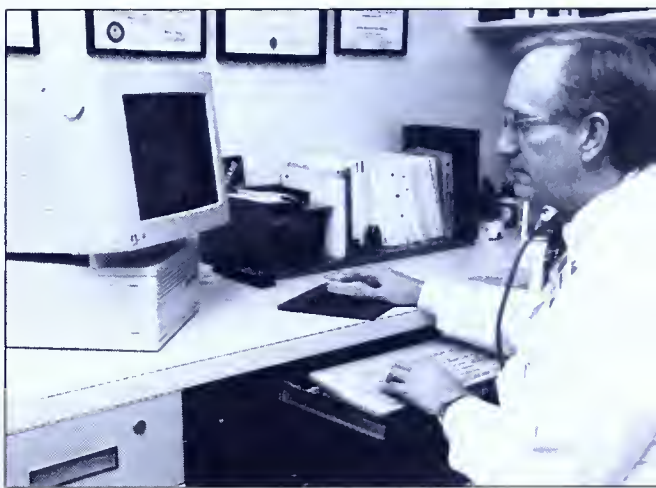
Of all hunters shot in mistake for game between 1982 and 1991, more than 70 percent were turkey hunters. Rightfully, turkey hunting earned the reputation of being Pennsylvania’s most dangerous hunting sport.

The fundamental cause of turkey hunting accidents is hunters not properly identifying their targets. While hunter education is important in resolving this problem, it is not a cure-all. About half of the accident offenders completed hunter-ed, so it’s difficult to imagine additional education programs providing significant relief.

Reducing turkey hunting accidents must focus upon lessening the chances of misidentifying a hunter as a turkey. And the key to this visibility is fluorescent orange. All turkey hunters should wear fluorescent orange, whether moving or stationary, to make them visible to other hunters.

There’s no question that fluorescent orange prevents accidents. Since requiring fluorescent orange for deer hunting in Pennsylvania, the number of “shot in mistake for game” accidents has decreased 40 percent. Also, for the 1992 fall hunting season, when fluorescent orange clothing became mandatory for turkey hunters, the number of turkey hunting accidents dramatically decreased. There were only six accidents last fall, and only two were instances of a hunter being shot in mistake for game.

Some turkey hunters claim that they’re less likely to get a turkey within shooting range while wearing fluorescent orange. A cooperative 3-year study involving representatives of Penn State, the Game Commission, and the Pennsylvania chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation refutes this contention. The study found no significant differences in turkey sightings or numbers of turkeys harvested among



groups of hunters who wore fluorescent orange caps, fluorescent orange camo, or full camouflage caps.

Accidents will not disappear solely through the use of fluorescent orange. Line-of-fire and ricochet accidents are caused by hunters not knowing what lies in or beyond their target path. And unsafe firearms handling accounts for a number of accidents each year, cases in which hunters shoot themselves or those around them. These incidents can be prevented only through safe gun handling.

Some hunters believe the use of rifles should be outlawed for turkey hunting. Had this been the case, some fatal accidents wouldn’t have occurred or been so tragic. However, this is only symptomatic for hunters failing to properly identify their targets. Rifles merely allow turkey hunters to shoot farther.

The control of turkey hunting accidents requires the cooperation of all wild turkey hunters. By abiding by the hunter’s code of ethics, applying common sense, and increasing their visibility, hunters can definitely make turkey hunting a more safe and enjoyable sport for all concerned.

Dr. Smith is a Critical Care Specialist at Geisinger Medical Center. He and associated trauma surgeons became interested in hunting safety through treating accident victims. Dr. Smith is also an avid hunter and a member of the NWTF’s Turkey Hunting Safety Task Force.



FIELD NOTES

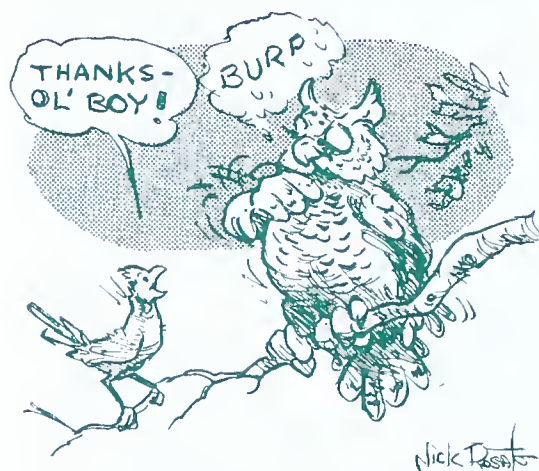


Deer Antler Damage

SOMERSET COUNTY — While getting my state vehicle repaired, I bumped into a farmer who began ribbing me about deer damage to his tractor. He was getting a tire fixed, a flat he claimed was caused by a deer antler he ran over. He showed me the 4-point antler and, sure enough, as the station attendant began patching the holes, we saw that they aligned perfectly with the four tines. — WCO Clifford E. Guindon, Jr., Boswell.

Littering Steals Your Money

CRAWFORDCOUNTY — I'm always amazed at the amount of litter in our parking areas and the almost constant vandalism committed against our signs and structures. We spend an incredible amount of money fixing up what others tear down — money that would be better spent on wildlife habitat. If you want the Commission to spend your license money more constructively, pick up some litter the next time you're afield, and please report any incidents of vandalism you witness. — LMO W.P. Anderson, Titusville.



Dinner (and Justice) is Served

DELAWARE COUNTY — After getting a complaint about a house cat ambushing songbirds at a feeder, I went to talk to the pet owner. I explained at length how much destruction cats cause, and she promised to keep the animal inside. A while later I got a rather hysterical call from her. It seems she had broken her promise and let the cat out, but this time a great horned owl put an end to the pet's predation. The songbirds and other small animals in the community owe a debt to that winged predator for removing a domestic killer from their midst. — WCO J. Christopher Heil, Edgemont.

A First?

CHESTER COUNTY — The first four hunters I checked during the early Canada goose season had 19 geese between them — only one of the hunters was short his limit. These birds were part of a large resident flock that had been inflicting serious crop damage on local farm fields near Struble Lake. The sportsmen shared some of their harvest with the farmer who gave them permission. My observations lead me to believe the early season is helping to reduce the nuisance Canadas, and the hunters and farmers all seem happy. — WCO Dan Yahner, Honey Brook.

In Memoriam

BUTLER COUNTY — Back in July, the Commission and the outdoor community lost a good man when Dan C. Kriebel of Parker died of a heart attack. A 20-year hunter education instructor here, Dan received the agency's HTE Instructor of the Year award just two years ago. Dan left behind a legacy of passing knowledge onto youths. He will be missed. — WCO A.L. Brunst, Jr., Portersville.

Career Choices

BRADFORD COUNTY — Last fall I met singer Gary Morris and drummer Brad Smith. They'd come here to film a special on Pennsylvania turkey hunting, and when they gave a concert in Wilkes-Barre, my wife and I attended. Brad took us back stage, and after the show we went out to supper. I said it must be exciting to travel around the world giving concerts. "Well," he replied, "it's a job. If I had my choice I'd much rather be a game warden." — WCO William A. Bower, Troy.

Fatal Reminder

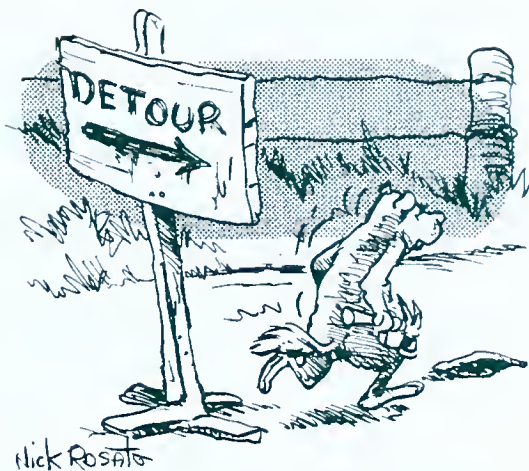
ADAMS COUNTY — The recent rabies death of a New York girl should remind us all that we must be cautious around wild animals — especially those that behave abnormally. Protect yourself from being bitten or scratched, and never place your fingers in your mouth, nose or eyes after handling any animal. Keep pet food dishes inside at night to avoid attracting wild animals or other pets to the area. — WCO Larry Haynes, Gettysburg.

Striped Surveyor

MONROECOUNTY — I'd opened the garage door at 3 a.m. while getting ready for an early dove morning survey. Later that day, I found my garage in a shambles — a ladder knocked down, shelves cleared of their articles and cans overturned on the floor. Apparently when I'd opened the door a skunk had wandered in and had decided to conduct a survey of its own. — WCO Thomas M. Smith, Bartonsville.

Bears and Trees

TRAINING SCHOOL — On assignment with LMO Steve Opet in Schuylkill County, I got my first look at bear damage. We found a lot of choke cherry trees hanging out over the road, almost as if a storm had broken them. Closer inspection revealed claw marks, caused by the bears pulling the trees over to get at the fruit. — Trainee Ed Urban, Harrisburg.



Tough Dig

BEDFORD COUNTY — I'm often amazed at how wild animals adapt to civilization. I was really surprised one day to see a woodchuck disappear into a pothole in a paved road. I stopped for a closer look and discovered the pothole was actually an entrance to the animal's burrow. — WCO Len Groshek, Everett.

Bobcat Bonanza

SOMERSET COUNTY — Bobcat sightings have become more frequent here in the last two years. Local car salesman Ron Kimmel, who spends a lot of time driving, walking and biking on Laurel Mountain, told me of a small bobcat that ran across the road in front of him. The cat had a small groundhog in its mouth, and Ron slowed almost to a stop as the bobcat trotted about 20 yards down the road before disappearing into the forest. — WCO Daniel W. Jenkins, Somerset.

Ready for the Circus

While doing a habitat survey on SGL 292 with Forester Gary Glick, I saw a gray fox leap out of a scrub oak and jump onto a chestnut oak. The animal climbed up 15 feet, perching momentarily on a limb to watch us. Then the fox leaped off the tree and took off. I'd read about gray foxes being able to climb trees, but that's the first time I'd seen one do it. — LMO Edward J. Zindell, Wilkes-Barre.

Who Wouldn't Be?

While traveling Interstate 70, I saw the car in front of me suddenly swerve to the side of the road. Thinking there might be trouble, I pulled in behind it. Turns out it was a family from Ontario that had pulled over to look at three deer in a field. While talking to them, I got the feeling they were more excited about seeing deer than they were about their vacation to Washington, DC. — LMO D.R. Koppenhaver, Everett.



Looking Good

CLARION COUNTY — Bear hunting should be good here again this year. Damage complaints and bear sightings are up, and several people have reported seeing bears in the 300- to 400-pound class. Although many hunters from here head to the big woods for the three-day season, they may be pleasantly surprised if they decide to hunt locally. — WCO David E. Beinhour, Knox.

Staying Power

INDIANA COUNTY — Hurricane Andrew continues to have an impact, one that is felt all the way up here by farmers, and nursery and orchard operators. Our deer deterrent fencing program is being slowed by a difficulty in getting materials. The demand for lumber created by the massive destruction in Florida has created a shortage in fence posts. — WCO Melvin A. Schake, Indiana.

Roam on the Range

A couple months ago a buffalo escaped from an enclosure in Columbia County, and so far it has avoided capture. I was inspecting some food plots on a game lands near where the animal had been last seen, and I came upon what looked like buffalo droppings. I know game lands are used by a variety of animals, but I never dreamed they would host a species that vanished from the state a couple centuries ago. — LMO Keith P. Sanford, Mifflinville.

Important Restoration

TRAINING SCHOOL — During our recent land management training, I saw a lot of wetlands that had been filled in. The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service estimates that more than half of our original wetlands have been destroyed, and that about 300,000 wetland acres are lost each year. It's a great pleasure, however, to see the service, the Game Commission and other agencies ambitiously working with private landowners to restore these vital areas. Wetlands are home to nearly 700 plant and animal species; they filter pollutants; and they recharge our groundwater by storing moisture. We should all fully support this worthy effort. — WCO Guy Hansen, Harrisburg.

How Dare She

I've been thinking a lot lately about my 34 years with the agency, reflecting on how things have changed — mostly for the good. For instance, back in the "good old days" — before my phone number was unlisted — the telephone would ring off the hook night and day. In my second year on the job, my wife went to see her parents for a while, and I told a supervisor I could spend more time in the field while she was out. He promptly told me she shouldn't be visiting like that because there would be no one at home to answer the phone. — LMO Robert K. Muir, Kittanning.



No String Quartet

TRAINING SCHOOL — After LMO Ned Weston gave us a crow calling demonstration, I decided to try it. I bought a call and went out in the backyard on a Saturday afternoon. My raucous practice did bring in some crows, but not before my neighbors slammed shut their doors and windows — almost in unison. I guess suburbanites don't appreciate some outdoor skills. — Trainee Mike Doherty, Harrisburg.

Flashy Rider

WESTMORELAND COUNTY — Carmen Enciso is my hunter-ed coordinator, and a little while back he called to say he was coming to pick up some films and that he'd be riding his new motorcycle. Carmen is a safety conscious man, both on the road and in the hunting field, so I shouldn't have been surprised to see his blaze orange Harley Davidson. — WCO Joseph V. Stefko, Greensburg.

PCC Works

The Pennsylvania Conservation Corps, highlighted in the September *Game News*, teaches young adults skills they can use to get good jobs. PCC does a lot of fine work for us, from building maintenance and construction to habitat improvement projects. PCC crews allow us to accomplish many tasks we wouldn't otherwise have the manpower to do. — Land Management Supervisor Keith Harbaugh, Meadville.

Man and Machine

JUNIATA COUNTY — We stock pheasants on Safety Zone Cooperator Dave Stetler's farm, and last spring a cockbird began running out of the brush and strutting each time Dave started his tractor. By summer it got to the point that the pheasant followed Dave and the tractor everywhere they went, not leaving until the tractor was shut off. I only wish I knew whether the cockbird was attracted to Dave or the machine. — WCO Dan Clark, Honey Grove.

Educational Display

CRAWFORD COUNTY — Our exhibit at this year's county fair featured more than 50 animal mounts. One person took a long look at the loon we had displayed, and then said, "I didn't know we had penguins here." I corrected his identification and we talked for a while about the state's wildlife. — WCO Dave Myers, Linesville.



Playing Through

FRANKLIN COUNTY — Bear sightings are not that uncommon here these days. A youngster working at a local golf course pulled up to a mulch pile and found a bear inspecting the heap. The startled bruin reared up, which really impressed the boy. He said he got a good look over his shoulder as he pushed the golf cart accelerator almost through the floorboard. — WCO F.B. Clark, Fayetteville.

Bad Rap

POTTER COUNTY — When my nephew Seth saw three coyotes running across the hill, he began yelling about “wolves.” Seth’s parents said he was visibly shaken by the incident, although now he laughs it off. It’s unfortunate that many people see the coyote as evil. They’re beautiful animals that are part of nature. — WCO William C. Ragosta, Coudersport.

Checks and Balances

TRAINING SCHOOL — On an assignment in the Northwest, I had the opportunity to look at the area around a tree that contained a bald eagle nest. Scattered on the ground were the remains of several carp. LMO Ned Weston explained that carp destroy aquatic vegetation by rooting it up, and the eagles provide a valuable service to waterfowl and other wildlife by removing the destructive carp. — Trainee Scott W. Tomlinson, Harrisburg.

Life-Saving Collar

WYOMING COUNTY — Jim Holzschuh watched in horror as a bear attacked and carried off his German shepherd. Jim followed the bear into a swamp and was about to give up hope when he saw something stir; the bear had pushed the dog sideways into the mud, but its head was out and moving slightly. Apparently, the bear had grabbed the dog’s collar instead of its neck, which saved the pet’s life. — WCO William Wasserman, Tunkhannock.

Impressive Milestone

ALLEGHENY COUNTY — Each year our Hunter-Trapper Education instructors introduce thousands of youngsters to hunting. One such hard-working instructor is John Wermlinger of Cheswick, who recently instructed his 20,000th student — an impressive milestone. John began instructing in the 1960s and has given fully of his time to young sportsmen and women. — WCO R.T. Cramer, White Oak.



Sharing

VENANGO COUNTY — Deputy Rich Westerbeck gives many eagle programs at Pymatuning. One day, Rich, Homer Hart and a wildlife photographer saw an immature eagle floundering in the lake. They quickly got a boat and went to the rescue. When they got close to the struggling eagle, they found it was “dragging” a big fish to shore. Soon an adult bald eagle showed up to help share in the harvest. — WCO Leo C. Yahner, Franklin.

WILD About It

BLAIR COUNTY — As a Project WILD facilitator, I’ve been able to meet teachers from across the region. Project WILD teaches kids how to think rather than what to think. The aim is to acquaint students with the roles of man and wildlife in nature, and I think it’s a giant step in educating our kids to be good, knowledgeable stewards of our environment. — WCO Donald D. Martin, Hollidaysburg.

Tomorrow’s Leaders

BEDFORD COUNTY — Last August I worked with nine Weblo scouts at a week-long camp. They spent their time learning about nature and developing outdoor skills. I think the Boy Scout program and its volunteer leaders does a great job of instilling leadership and an appreciation of nature in our young men. — WCO Jim Trombetto, New Enterprise.

Budget, land issues dominate Commission meeting

COMMISSIONERS received information on a wide variety of topics during their two-day meeting in Harrisburg, Sept. 29-30. Of primary concern was the agency's budget for fiscal year 1994.

The budget, approved by unanimous vote, totals more than \$60.6 million — a 4 percent increase over the current fiscal year. The lion's share of the increase comes from personnel costs. Because the Commission is a service-oriented operation, it comes as little surprise that personnel costs represent 62 percent of the budget.

The Game Commission and other agencies are restricted by state-mandated complement ceilings, but the agency is able to compensate for this through operational expenses, which make up 21 percent of the budget. The acquisition of automated data processing equipment and other investments enables the Commission to increase the efficiency of its staff.

Fixed assets were budgeted at 14 percent; grants and subsidies, 3 percent.

Both Executive Director Pete Duncan and Deputy Executive Director Steve Williams pointed out that expenses are beginning to outstrip revenues. They told Commissioners and the audience that the agency will likely seek a license fee increase in 1995.

One of the agency's big expenses is land acquisition. At the meeting, Commissioners approved the purchase of nearly 150 acres to be added to the state game lands system — at a cost of more than \$35,000. In addition, the agency was able to trade a half-acre along the Susquehanna River for 60 acres of railroad grade that traverses SGL 149.

The wildlife management bureau reported on the feasibility of starting elk populations in the Northeast Region. Al-

though some people have expressed a desire to see elk in that region, staff explained that the drawbacks outweigh the benefits. Importing animals from out of state brings with it the possibility of disease, and moving elk from the Northcentral would put that herd at risk.

But the primary reason for not moving elk into the Northeast is habitat. Elk are grazing animals that require grassy forest openings to survive. The Northeast does not have sufficient herbaceous openings to support elk, which means the far-ranging animals would quickly disperse to other areas. The possibility is too great that those other areas would be agricultural lands, increasing crop damage problems for farmers.

Habitat was also much on the minds of the Land Management Committee. Part of its report dealt with the agency's involvement in the transmission line proposed by General Public Utility Corp. and Duquesne Light Co. The Game Commission is "intervening" at Public Utilities Commission public hearings, testifying against the proposed transmission line. As planned, the line would affect 161 streams, 364 wetlands and eight game lands tracts.

The agency believes the environmental documentation filed by GPU/DQE is inadequate. The Commission is also concerned about sedimentation and erosion problems the line might cause, as well as impacts it might have on endangered and threatened species. There is also the likelihood that the power line will bring an increase in illegal all-terrain-vehicle activity on game lands.

Lantz Hoffman, director of the Bureau of Information & Education, gave a report on the second annual "Governor's Conference on Our North American Hunting

Conservation News

Heritage.” Hoffman reinforced his remarks with taped excerpts of the conference, featuring, among others, noted outdoor writers Ted Kerasote, Wayne VanZwoll and Chris Madson.

The symposium focused on hunting’s declining popularity and possible solutions state agencies and the outdoor community should be looking at.

The two-day meeting concluded with an informational tour of SGL 170 in Perry County. Commissioners, state legislators’ representatives and concerned sportsmen heard detailed explanations of the agency’s timber management practices.

Discussions centered around the use of funds earmarked for “browse cutting.” Land management staff explained how it uses the so-called \$1.25 and \$2 funds, which by state law take money from each general license and antlerless license, respectively, and apply it to managing lands to produce more food for whitetails.

The funds were established in the 1950s, a time when deer populations were small and forests were in a successional stage that provided little low growth for deer browsing.

Today, much of the agency’s timber management is accomplished through commercial timber sales. This is the most efficient and cost-effective way to manage the game lands system. The Commission doesn’t have the manpower to cut 1 percent of forested gamelands property — its annual goal.

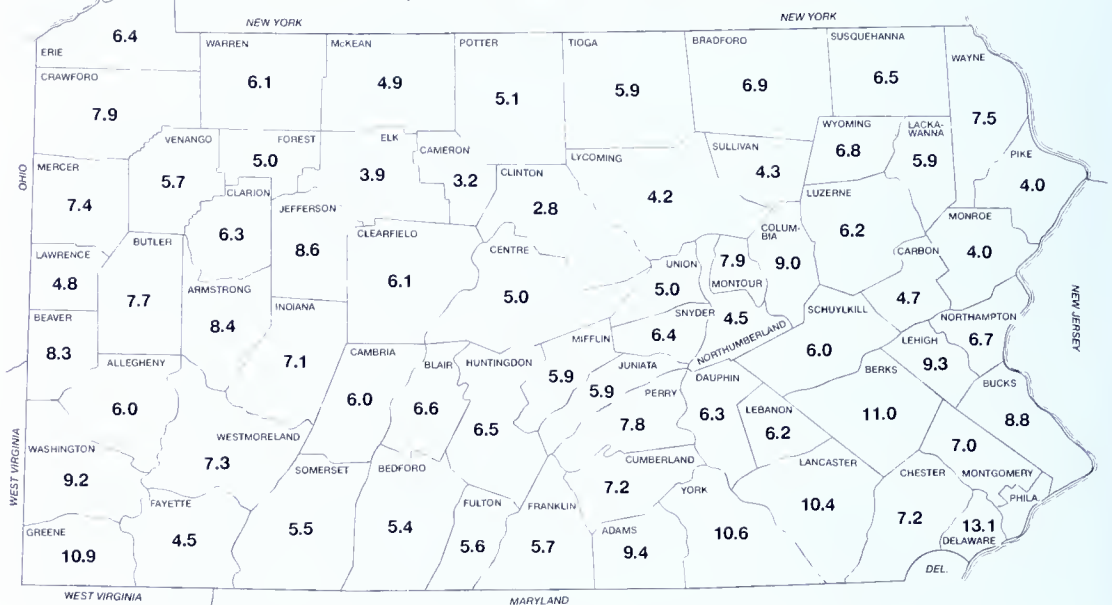
Commercial sales meet land management objectives and produce varied forest habitat benefiting a number of wildlife species, while at the same time providing income. Expenses incurred in setting up the timber sales are charged against the \$1.25 and \$2 accounts.

The next Commission meeting, which will deal with seasons and bag limits, is slated for Jan. 9-11. The public is invited. — *J. Scott Rupp*

PENNSYLVANIA GAME COMMISSION

1992

ANTLERED DEER HARVEST RATE PER SQUARE MILE OF FOREST



Turkey areas 2A, 2B, 3, 4, 5, 7 extended

Seasons in several turkey management units have been extended for the fall, either-sex hunt. In areas 2A and 2B the season will conclude Nov. 13, giving hunters two weeks to pursue turkeys in those areas. In areas 3, 4, 5 and a portion of 7, the season will end Nov. 20. The extension in Area 7 applies only to that portion north of Route 22 and Route 522 from Route 220 near Hollidaysburg on the west to Route 15 at Selinsgrove on the east.

Seasons will not be extended in other areas; areas 1 and 9 remain closed. Maps of area boundaries appear in the digest of hunting regulations.

Be on the lookout for dead pheasants

The Commission's pheasant restoration project, which involved stocking thousands of birds in six study areas closed to pheasant hunting, is well underway. Releases ended Oct. 5.

The agency wants people who find dead pheasants with leg bands to call their local region office. These birds are part of the restoration program. It's

expected that as the pheasants establish home ranges, some will be killed by cars, domestic pets and wild predators.

Please give the band number (you can keep the band), sex of bird, date and place found, and how the bird was killed (if known). This information is vital to the study.

Bear Check Stations

All black bears harvested during the Nov. 22-24 season must be taken to a Game Commission region office or bear check station. Check stations and region offices will check bears from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. on Nov. 22 and 23, and from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Nov. 24. After 6 p.m. on the 24th, call the appropriate region office.

NORTHWEST: Warren County — SGL 309, Route 127 two miles south of Tidioute; **Forest County** — Allegheny National Forest storage building, Marienville; **Jefferson County** — SGL 54 (site of the old Commission training school), seven miles north of Brockway off Route 28.

SOUTHWEST: Indiana County — Yellow Creek State Park off Route 422.

NORTHCENTRAL: Lycoming County — Lewis Township Municipal Building, intersection of routes 14 and 15, Trout Run; **Tioga County** — SGL 208 storage building, three miles north of Gaines on Route 349; **Clearfield County** — S.B. Elliott State Park, off Route 153 north of I-80, Exit 18; **McKean County** — Lantz Corners, intersection of routes 6 and 219; **Cameron County** — Sinnemahoning, intersection of routes 120 and 872; **Centre County** — Penn Nursery, Route 322 near Potters Mills; **Union County** — Bald Eagle State Forest headquarters, Route 45 just west of Route 235.

NORTHEAST: Monroe County — SGL 127 building, Route 423 two miles south of Tobyhanna; **Pike County** — SGL 180 Shohola building, Route 6 at Shohola Falls, 13 miles south of Hawley; **Sullivan County** — State Forestry building, Route 87, 1.5 miles south of Hillsgrove.

REGION OFFICES: **Northwest** (Venango County) — 1409 Pittsburgh Rd., three miles south of Franklin on Route 8; **Northcentral** (Lycoming County) — Route 44, 1.5 miles south of Jersey Shore; **Northeast** (Luzerne County) — intersection of routes 415 and 118, Dallas; **Southwest** (Westmoreland County) — 339 W. Main St., Ligonier; **Southcentral** (Huntingdon) — Route 22, one mile west of Huntingdon; **Southeast** (Berks County) — one mile off Route 222 on Snyder Road, seven miles north of Reading.

Venison meets needs of state's hungry

For the third year, the Hunters Sharing the Harvest program will take venison donations from successful deer hunters and provide it to local food banks.

Last year the program, run by Pennsylvanians for the Responsible Use of Animals, collected more than 70,000 pounds of venison. Organizers hope to top the 100,000 mark this season.

"We have a tremendous need for meat products," said Timothy Whelan of the South Central Pennsylvania Food Bank in Steelton. "We never get enough."

Hunters who wish to donate all or

some of their kill can call meat processors to see if they are participating in the project. Cooperating firms will accept and store meat donations and will contact a local food bank.

Hunters are responsible for all meat processing costs.

Sportsmen and women can also contact a local food bank directly (food banks are listed in phone directories under "food") and make arrangements to deliver deer meat right to the organization.

Hunters may also call PRUA to ask about making donations. The number is (717) 367-5223.

Fluorescent orange requirements in effect for big game, small game

The general small game and turkey seasons that began a short time ago mean nearly everyone afield is required to wear a minimum of 250 square inches of fluorescent orange on the head, chest and back combined. The orange must be visible for 360 degrees. Unlike spring seasons, the law requires fall turkey hunters to wear the minimum orange requirement while stationary.

As in the past, bear hunters and hunters participating in the firearms deer seasons must also meet the 250-square-inch minimum.

Safety regulations passed by the Commission last year expanded the fluorescent orange requirement to include most seasons. Waterfowlers and dove and crow hunters are exempt. While orange is not required during post-Christmas archery and flintlock deer seasons, at least 250 square inches is required for late small game and for extended deer hunts on special Deer Damage Areas.

SPORT essay contest underway

The Commission's SPORT Essay Contest is open to hunting-age youths across the state. This year's theme is "Respect for my sport — What it means to me and how it affects others."

The contest awards winners in senior (ages 16 to 18) and junior (12 to 15) categories. It is open to Pennsylvania residents who have completed a hunter-trapper education course and

possess a current hunting or furtaker license.

This contest's senior winner will receive a Savage Arms .270 rifle, and the junior winner will get a Savage .22 Hornet/20-gauge.

For complete contest rules, write the Commission in care of SPORT Essay Contest, 2001 Elmerton Ave., Harrisburg, PA 17110-9797.

PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES who require special assistance at Game Commission public functions should contact the telephone number listed with the announcement, the appropriate region office or the Harrisburg headquarters. Toll-free numbers for each region are listed in every issue of *Game News*; the Harrisburg number is (717) 787-4250.

Game Commission Sale Items

Books & Videos

Game Commission publications cover subjects from firearms and building nesting devices to animal lore and wild game cookery.

Quantity		Price
_____	<i>Shooter's Corner</i> , by Don Lewis	\$15.00
_____	<i>Birds of Pennsylvania</i> , by James & Lillian Wakeley	10.00
_____	<i>Pennsylvania Big Game Records, 1965-1986</i>	10.00
_____	<i>Gone for the Day</i> , by Ned Smith	4.00
_____	<i>Wild Game Cookbook</i>	4.00
_____	<i>Woodworking for Wildlife</i>	3.00
_____	<i>Ducks at a Distance</i>	1.00
_____	"On the Trail of Pennsylvania's Black Bears" video	29.95

Working Together for Wildlife

Proceeds from Working Together for Wildlife sales support nongame projects and research.

Art Prints — \$125 (plus \$97.50 for framing)		WTFW Patches — \$3	
_____	1994 "Winter Birds" by Stephen Leed	_____	1994 Winter Birds
_____	1993 "Bear Run" by Bob Sopchick	_____	1988 Snowy Egret
_____	1992 "Spring Strut" by Taylor Oughton	_____	1987 Elk
_____	1990 "Coming Home" by Gerald Putt	_____	1986 Kestrel
_____	1989 "Last Glance" by Jack Paluh	_____	1985 Bobcat
_____	1988 "Snowy Egret" by John Pritko		
_____	1987 "Autumn Challenge" by Bob Sopchick		
_____	1986 "Country Lane Kestrel" by Bob Sopchick		

Charts & Binders

Our popular bird and mammal charts illustrated by famed wildlife artist Ned Smith.

_____	Set No. 1 (birds — 4 charts) 20" x 30"	\$6
_____	Set No. 2 (birds & mammals — 4 charts) 20"x 30"	6
_____	Set No. 3 (all 8 charts) 11" x 14"	5
_____	Game News Binders	5

SPORT Items

Show your support for the Sportsmen Policing Our Ranks Together program.

_____	Bronze SPORT Tie-Tack/Lapel Pin	\$3.50
_____	SPORT Patch	1.00
_____	SPORT Hat (one size fits all)	4.00
_____	Turkey Alert Band	3.00

Waterfowl Management Stamps

Voluntary waterfowl management stamps provide vital funding for wetland acquisition and management. Each stamp is available for a three-year period only.

_____	1993 — Northern Shovelers by Glen Reichard	\$5.50
_____	1992 — Canada Geese by Bob Sopchick	5.50
_____	1991 — Wigeons by Gerald Putt	5.50

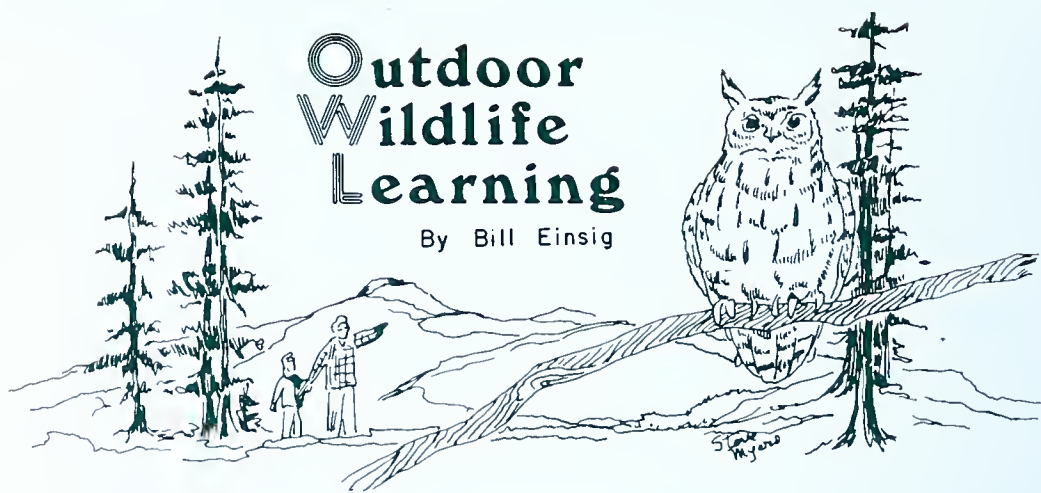
Miscellaneous Patches

Help promote the Commission's wildlife conservation programs with these handsome patches.

_____	"We Need Wildlife" Cardinal	\$3
_____	Pymatuning Wildlife Management Area	2
_____	Middle Creek Wildlife Management Area	2

Mail orders along with remittance (do not send cash) to:
PA Game Commission
Dept. MS
2001 Elmerton Ave.
Harrisburg, PA 17110-9797

Prices include delivery; PA residents add 6% sales tax. Checks should be made payable to Pennsylvania Game Commission.



A Treasury of Wildlife

THERICHARD M. NIXON County Park is nestled in a wooded valley near Jacobus in southern York County. It is one of the county's six parks and totals more than 3,600 acres. Like many other municipal parks, those in York County provide picnic facilities, recreation areas, hiking, biking and horse trails as well as special programming from seminars and starwatches to concerts and canoe rides.

Throughout the year, visitors can choose a quiet place to walk, to eat with family and friends, or to learn something new in one of the park areas. But Nixon Park is special; something makes it unusual and sets it apart.

In 1968, Richard M. Nixon was the newly elected President of the United States. Yorker Bob Hoffman, the founder of York Barbell and a national figure in the realm of weightlifting and bodybuilding, donated 143 acres of former farm land to the county. The donation came with two stipulations: Hoffman wanted the land to be used as a park dedicated to environmental education and to be named after Nixon.

Since then Nixon Park has evolved into a leading center for conservation and environmental education in southcentral Pennsylvania and northern Maryland. Thousands of

schoolchildren and adults visit the park and participate in the various programs offered there each year. There is, however, no ball field, no pavilion, no picnic tables. Nixon Park encourages visitors to walk the trails and explore the pond and stream in quiet observation of nature at work.

The Nature Center is the hub of activity at Nixon Park. It houses the two full-time naturalists and is headquarters for the many volunteers who assist with nature walks and provide other instructional classes for visitors. A program with the variety and involvement of Nixon Park owes a great debt to the volunteers who enable the staff to do much more than they could alone. Volunteers also run several satellite programs such as York Wildcare, Inc., a federally permitted wildlife rehabilitation organization.

The Nature Center has numerous learning stations and excellent displays for visitors of all ages. There is a working honeybee colony, a bird watching corner, plus many objects to touch, smell and watch. Some displays focus specifically on the local nature of York County. Wood panels, for example, from trees such as black cherry, ash, tulip poplar and black walnut were all cut from



KIM YOUNG, park naturalist, points out to Molly Einsig some of the features of a black bear. The big game collection donated to the Nixon Park is an outstanding educational resource.

park property and milled just for use in the center. A massive rock wall forms an impressive centerpiece as well as a guide to the common rocks found throughout the county. Visitors get a quick overview of the complex geologic history of the county and can then walk through a portion of that story on the outside geology trail.

Treasury of Wildlife

Recently, Nixon Park opened the newest, and most dramatic, addition to its nature center. An expansive wing was built specifically to house one of the finest collections of mounted big game animals found anywhere.

York resident William G. Kohler spent decades hunting throughout the world. He accumulated more than 200 mounts, many of which feature animals that may no longer be hunted. In 1992, Kohler donated his mounts, with an estimated value of \$2 million, to York County Parks. Before they could accept

this outstanding gift, the park system had to construct a wing at the Nixon Park Nature Center to house the collection.

Although the new addition, called the "Treasury of Wildlife" wing, is now open and most of the mounts are on display, it will be some time before the exhibition is truly complete. Pennsylvania artists Dennis Burkhart, Bob Sopchick and Galen Bray will combine their talents to bring the wildlife mounts to life. The artists will create several dioramas depicting major ecological systems of the world, with appropriate wildlife. Initially, they plan to create natural settings depicting life in polar regions, Alaska and Northwest territories, and Africa.

The Treasury of Wildlife includes many familiar species. Visitors will see black bear, whitetails, mule deer, moose, elk and caribou. Of course, there is an assortment of smaller mammals the kids will easily recognize. But there are also many species that will

make most visitors pause and take a second look.

When was the last time you saw a bontebok, gerenuk or dik dik? How about a scimitar-horned oryx? All of these are hoofed and horned animals similar to antelope. They all live in various regions of Africa and some are very difficult to breed, or even keep, in captivity. For many of us, our only chance of ever seeing and studying some of these unusual species is to visit an exhibition of mounts.

The scimitar-horned oryx is a sturdy animal with very long, striking horns that bend to the rear and downward like a curved saber. They originally lived throughout the Sahara Desert in North Africa but are now found only along the southern edge of their former range. Gerenuks have long, slender necks and frequently stand on their hind legs to reach browse.

If all the visitors to this collection voted for their favorite animal, my guess is the dik dik would win easily. This dwarf antelope stands only about 12 to 15 inches high with features so tiny that even the adults resemble miniature fawns. But, then again, that huge polar bear or, maybe, the kodiak, could garner a lot of votes, too.

An Odd-Couple?

Do mounts of big game animals belong in an environmental education center? That question will undoubtedly be asked many times in years to come and, I'm certain, Nixon Park's staff has had to wrestle with it themselves. The obvious value of the mounts as dynamic teaching aids had to be a powerful consideration.

But there is an unusual contrast in the Nature Center that was not there before. As I walked from the familiar displays of the original section over to the new wing with its mounts, I could sense a change in how I felt. Much of this was probably due to the new paint, bright spaces and slick, modern fin-

ishes of the exhibit hall. Still, there was also something else.

The old section always spoke to me on behalf of nature. I'm comfortable learning about the way nature operates, how she has solved the problems of making it all somehow work together. I'm comfortable with the raccoon, opossum and bluebird mounts along with the dozens of other mounts of familiar Pennsylvania animals because I know something about their lives and how they fit into the scheme of things.

I'm a bit less comfortable in the new wing for two reasons. First, it reminds me of my own ignorance. I know very little about most of the animals displayed in this area. I can't draw on past experiences, past encounters, as I can with more familiar animals. As I look at these mounts with my own children, or with my students, we will be on a much the same level, and I'll probably learn much from them.

The second reason this new area makes me a bit uneasy is that it reminds me of the human influence on all ecosystems. Many of these large mammals are under increased pressure from poachers, habitat loss and environmental changes. Many of them also live in areas where social problems make wildlife a very low priority.

This exhibit reminds me that to truly understand natural systems, I must also try to understand the impact I, and my own kind, have had on these populations. Nature study by itself, as though it were separate from humanity, is not enough. In reality, this confrontation is the essence of environmental education. If I worked at Nixon Park, I'd be tempted to erect a sign that read "Nature Center This Way: Environmental Center Over There!"

For more information on the Treasury of Wildlife and other aspects of Richard M. Nixon County Park, contact Nixon Park Nature Center, RD 8, Box 438A, York, PA 17403.

Getting There & Back Again

THOSE WHO don't hunt might think the challenge of the sport lies in being out in the woods with all those wild animals. We hunters know the real challenge is in getting to the woods and then getting back again.

Going to and from the hunting grounds is a part of the experience that's rarely mentioned. Whether it's waterfowl, wild turkey or woodchuck, if a hunter can't walk outside his door and start shooting, he's got to make a trip.

The first part of getting there is the "who's driving?" decision. Since few volunteer, this means convincing the one with the biggest, most comfortable, or the only four-wheel-drive vehicle that what he really wants to do on a Saturday morning is drive two hours while his passengers sleep. It can also mean drafting as driver the person who got the most sleep the night before, or who is just a "morning person," able to function with both eyes open before the sun comes up. In lieu of that, if the occupant of the front passenger seat has an eye open as well, it'll make two good ones between them.

The next part of getting there is group collection. Will everyone be at the driver's house at or before the appointed time? Or if the driver's going door-to-door, will every hunter be on the porch with his gear ready when the horn's honked? What are you betting?

A good rule of thumb is for the driver to tell riders to arrive at his home, or that he'll pick them up, half an hour before the real departure time. The group won't actually leave any earlier, but the driver can get 30 more minutes of sleep with this white lie. Plus, everyone will be apologizing to him because they'll think they're late.



JUST getting a group of hunters together, along with all their guns, ammo, decoys, food and other equipment, can be a major undertaking, not to mention transporting the group into the field.

On the flip side, while the riders are waiting patiently at their door, hunting coat and gun case in hand, they'll be wondering, "Did the driver get up or is that so-and-so still snoring?" It's guaranteed that when they're finally convinced he's forgotten and is still in dreamland, and they pick up the phone to wake him, he'll be pulling in the driveway. The call will have gone through, though, to an irate spouse who thought that just for once they'd be able to sleep in.

Of course, carrying companions to the day's hunt doesn't just mean packing people in the car. It's firearm(s) or bow(s) for each,

Another View...

by Linda Steiner

plus arrows and extra arrows, or shells and extra shells.

Then there are heavy hunting coats and pants for the morning cold, lightweight coats and pants if the weather changes for the better, rain coats and pants if the weather changes for the worst, ditto on the types of boots and hats.

Don't forget thermoses, sandwiches and "emergency" bags of extra food, as if there weren't a diner or grocery store within 50 miles. Of course, the hunters will insist half their gear be stowed alongside them on the seat, not in the trunk. In their defense, it is comfortable to sleep on.

I've noticed that morning drives fall into two categories: loud and silent. Either everyone in the vehicle is chattering or it's like a tomb. There's no predicting whether it will seem like a party or a wake.

Perfect for Napping

Perhaps "wake" isn't the right word, because when the car is silent it's because no one but the driver is awake. If the route is over an interstate, the soothing rhythm of the wheels will be perfect for napping, increasing the hunters' nighttime sleep total to 5½ hours instead of the usual four. Of course, that's unless one is an inveterate snorer, in which case his spouse back home is the only one getting the extra shut-eye.

As for the talkative trips, mornings are full of optimism. Everyone's already decided exactly where and how they're going to begin the day afield, but on the journey those choices tend to change with public opinion.

It's not unusual that after a week of preparation, a hunter will have completely revised his plans by the end of a 10-minute drive. It's predictable that after spending 10 minutes in the new choice of stand, he'll be regretting the switch. Given another hour, he may be taking all the credit for making the change, when the tag or the game bag's been filled. Or he may still be grumbling.

The trip home should be just a reverse of the morning's journey, but it's not. There's a wait for late-returning hunters, because

there's no fibbing about the time to be back to the vehicle. Quitting time is down in black and white in the hunting regulation book. One hunter always dawdles, or has hiked farther in, or has become "confused" about which way is out.

That's something the morning doesn't offer, the nagging worry of the group that the late hunter is lost or injured. Or it might be that he's dragging a deer or foolish enough to try to drag a bear alone. Maybe he needs help. Does anyone know where he's hunting? Should we go after him or should we wait? Anyone know the number of the local search and rescue?

As in that morning phone call, just when the group's decided to go for the fire department, a flashlight flickers in the woods or there's the sound of boots on the gravel road. The hunter's got an explanation for his tardiness, and the rest utter a quiet sigh of relief.

A vehicle packed for the trip "from" looks nothing like the same car loaded for the trip "to." Although there's less to carry, lunches have been eaten and some of the shells have been shot, the material seems to have bloated.

It's certainly no longer contained tightly in bags and boxes, or organized into sections in the trunk or rear of the vehicle, this corner for Joe, this one for Sam. Sam's socks are in Joe's boots, Joe's gun's under George's coat, George's sweater's in Charlie's duffle, Sam has Charlie's lunch pie — lucky him.

Returning hunters have a blind faith that it'll all sort out later. But there's always some fuss-budget who's crying, "Where's my extra gloves? Who's got my box call? Has anyone seen my hot seat?" when everyone else is content to close the lid on the mixture. In democracy at work, the fidgeter must wait for journey's end to recover his belongings.

The only items worth searching for are whatever food is left. The drive home is a communal sharing of cookies and crumbs, sat-on sandwiches, dregs of the coffee, and a pawning off of carrot sticks and pickles. It's an unwritten rule that if it's edible, it

doesn't get buried in the gear pile. Somehow food floats to the top.

Sometimes the hunters have to figure out where to fit the game they've killed. It's not so bad if it's a brace of rabbits or a pheasant apiece, but if they've all harvested deer, that quickly cuts the amount of trunk space. Hunters get quite ingenious in how to bend whitetail legs and find cushions for antlers, while cramming in all the equipment and people that need to get back. Deer don't pile well, but the spaces around them can be packed with clothes, bows, even hunters.

If the day's been successful, there's no

lack of conversation on the way back, only a vying for the floor. If the hunt didn't go well, the trip will begin subdued. But it's a rule that optimism for the next hunt will increase in direct proportion to the distance away from the site of the day's frustrations.

From being tired, disappointed and befuddled on how and where to hunt next, before the group pulls into their hometown, they'll have a plan for the following week, and a hopeful outlook on the rest of the season. And you thought all that was accomplished in getting there and back was putting miles under tires!

Fun Games

It's All in the Hunt

By **Connie Mertz**

Place the letter of the correct hunting term in the space provided.

- ___ Number of game species which can be legally harvested in a day.
- ___ Hunting from a vehicle.
- ___ Unlawful to hunt within this area unless granted permission from landowner.
- ___ Taking of game by hunting or trapping.
- ___ Area where it's safe to shoot.
- ___ Game laws.
- ___ Illegal use of artificial or natural baits to attract game for the purpose of hunting.
- ___ Artificial light used to see wildlife at night. Legal hours are sunrise to 11 p.m., except during the regular firearms seasons, when no spotlighting is permitted.
- ___ Unwritten law of hunter behavior.

(M) Zone of Fire
(S) Hunting over Bait
(O) Bag Limit
(T) Spotlighting
(A) Regulations

(P) Safety Zone
(N) Road Hunting
(R) Harvest
(S) Outdoor Ethics
(L) Hunting Seasons

Unscramble the letters to find out what every hunter should be.

answers on p. 64

*A belief in a supernatural source of evil
is not necessary; men alone are quite
capable of every wickedness.*

— Joseph Conrad
Under Western Eyes

DEUPT MARSHALL STOVER was tired and sore. After a long night on patrol, all he wanted was to crawl in bed. In fact, that was where he was headed when a spotlight swept the field ahead of him. Simultaneously the radio reported shots fired on Firehouse Hill — his very location, by a stroke of luck. But luck is a relative term; the events that followed could have cost Marshall his life.

Stover cut his lights and waited. With his Blazer concealed in a shadow cast by the moon, he watched three deer in the field. When a spotlight shot out from a pickup 200 yards away, Stover just knew the reported shooting had come from that vehicle. Not wanting to drive into their line of fire, if they should shoot, Stover waited. The deer suddenly bolted, and the spotlight went dead.

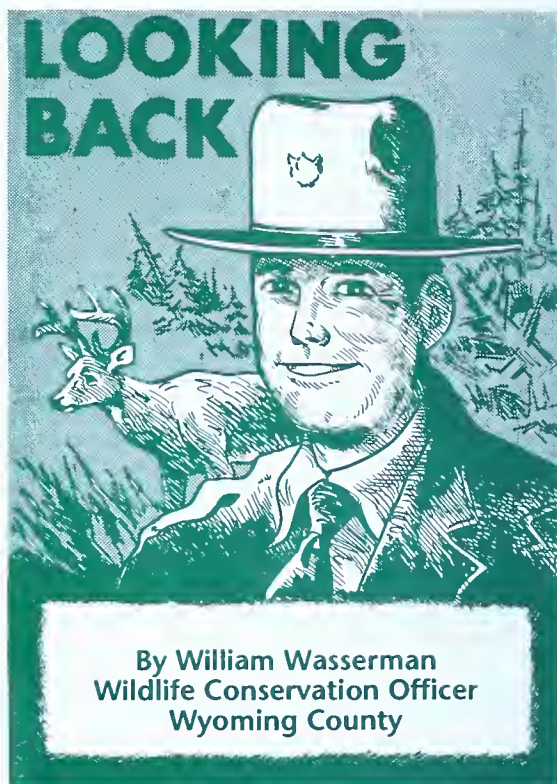
Stover turned on his red light and hit the accelerator. Within seconds he saw the dead-end dirt lane that cut into the field; he'd almost forgotten about it. The vehicle was trapped.

But when he made the turn, the three deer that had just bolted from the spotlight suddenly jumped in front of him. He slammed on his brakes, producing a dust cloud so thick he had to stop. He quickly radioed Deputy Roy Dailey, who was several miles away.

When the dust settled, Marshall saw a black pickup, about 300 feet away, stopped at the edge of the lane. Its dull outline barely discernable, it sat like some hunkered beast.

Marshall drove up to the truck and stopped. His red light flashed brightly as he stepped into the dark November night.

As he carefully approached the pickup, its headlights suddenly flashed



on with a blinding light. Stover, dressed in full uniform, signaled the truck to stay.

But the pickup lurched forward, striking Stover's left leg. The deputy quickly placed his knee on the bumper and launched himself up on the hood. With the truck rushing on, Marshall clung precariously to the hood, praying he wouldn't fall beneath the truck's turning wheels.

He began screaming at the driver to stop. He could see two men inside, with two rifles between them. In that fleeting second, he realized he was outnumbered and outgunned — and almost wished he'd never found the truck.

After being carried 20 feet or so, Stover didn't think he could last much longer. He reached for his revolver.

Evidently the driver saw this and brought the truck to a bone-jarring halt. Stover leaped off the hood, rushed to the driver's open window and ordered both men to place their hands on the dashboard. They stared back, refusing to budge. Marshall realized he could no

longer see the rifles — one could be in his face at any instant.

Marshall opened the door, grabbed the driver's left arm and swiftly guided him out of the truck. He saw the guns on the floor. Stover wanted to handcuff the driver but didn't want the passenger left alone with the rifles.

It was a bad situation: One man outside, the other inside, screened by the shadow of the truck's cab. Stover was reluctant to search the driver because he wanted to keep his eyes on the passenger. He ordered the driver to place his hands on the hood of the truck, and the man complied. Next he ordered the passenger to get out. Stover then reached inside, switched off the ignition and dropped the keys into his coat pocket.

Both men were standing with legs spread, their chests on the hood of the truck, when they suddenly turned and came at him.

The driver, a lean 6-2, led the charge. Stover drew his baton and jabbed it into his gut.

The driver doubled over, expelled a long choking breath, then staggered back to the truck. His companion went with him. Satisfied they would stay put for a while, Stover climbed into the cab and removed two rifles, a shotgun, several boxes of ammunition, four knives and a spotlight. Then he peered into the truck bed, and what he saw left no doubt he'd caught two poachers.

When the dispatcher contacted me with Stover's call for help, I pushed my vehicle to the limit, and in 20 minutes I was at the scene.

I was relieved to see Deputy Roy Dailey there, along with two state troopers, Paul Samuels and Mark Lavelle. Everything seemed to be under control. I walked over to Stover. "Are you okay, Marshall?"

"I'm fine. It got a little hairy for a moment, but we understand each other now. Walk back with me, Bill. I want to show you something."



Question

If I shoot a deer and find that it has been hit by a vehicle and is unfit to eat, do I have to tag it?

Answer

Yes. However, if the deer — or bear or turkey — was unfit for human consumption at the time it was killed, a replacement tag may be obtained by contacting the region office.

As I followed Marshall to the back of the truck he told me what had happened. After learning about his ride on the hood, I realized these men were dangerous.

"Take a look at this," Marshall said as he shined his flashlight into the bed." There was a large cardboard box smeared with wet blood and deer hair. Fresh deer droppings were scattered next to it, and more blood and hair was spattered on the tailgate and bumper. It was so cold that night that blood would've frozen quickly, so apparently the pair had just dropped off a deer.

I walked over to the suspects. Stover had told me both men, Aldo Barretta and Jake Ryno, had been searched after the troopers arrived. They were from the Poconos. Ryno, the passenger, seemed more cooperative than Barretta, so I started with him.

"I'm conservation officer Wasserman," I said. "Walk to the back of the truck. I want to ask you some questions."

"Where is the deer you shot to-night?" I asked.

"What deer?" Ryno said dryly. He was about 5-9 and had arms the size of a

man's thigh. His deeply tanned face bore thick, wide eyebrows that formed two sinister arches. A dense mustache grew in a perpetual frown, giving him the gruff appearance of some surly bounty hunter from the Old West. There was blood on his boots.

"There's blood and deer hair all over the bed of this truck," I said. "What happened to the carcass?"

Ryno examined me, then said, "I don't know anything about any deer."

"Then how'd you get blood on your boots?"

"I don't know how it got there."

Ryno had obviously been around the block. He answered my questions but told me nothing. It was a game to him.

Trooper Samuels called out and said he and Trooper Lavelle had to answer another call. They'd be back as soon as possible. I thanked them for their help and told Ryno to walk back and place his hands on the hood.

Aldo Barretta stared coldly as I approached him. "I have a few questions for you," I said. "Walk to the back of the truck."

Barretta ambled back, then faced me. Tall and lanky, his deeply hollowed cheeks and pale skin gave him the gaunt look of a drug addict. And he was obviously nervous.

"What happened to the deer that was in your truck?" I said.

"I didn't have a deer in my truck."

"Well, something was in there; I'm assuming it was a dead deer. Maybe it was something else . . ."

"Yeah, like what?"

"All blood looks alike. For all I know it could be human." Of course, I was

already sure it was a deer because of all the evidence, but I wanted to keep him guessing.

"Get real, man!"

"What is it then?"

"I don't know," he said.

"Then how do you know it's not human?"

Barretta stuffed his hands in his pockets and stared sullenly. It seemed useless to continue questioning him. Since we didn't have a deer, my only choice was to take the truck. Everything I needed for a case was there: blood, hair, droppings.

"Go back to your friend," I said. And as Barretta walked away, I turned to tell Marshall my intentions.

But as I turned, Marshall saw Barretta suddenly turn toward me. He yelled, and I spun around to find Barretta only inches away, reaching for me. I slammed both palms into his chest, sending him reeling backwards into the hood of the truck. He stood there glaring back at me, and for a moment I thought he might charge again, but he stayed put.

While I called for a wrecker, Stover and Dailey began gathering firearms and other evidence. They also took some blood and hair samples for the State Police Crime Lab. While searching, Dailey happened to overhear Ryno say to Barretta, "Why don't we just tell 'em it was a roadkill and get this over with?"

When he told me that, I thought perhaps they were beginning to realize the seriousness of their situation and were ready to talk. If they wanted to say it was a roadkill, that was fine with me. It was a start.

Commission 800 Numbers

Within Pennsylvania, use the agency's toll-free 800 numbers to contact a wildlife conservation officer. For the Northwest Region, call (800) 533-6764; Southwest, (800) 243-8519; Northcentral, (800) 422-7551; Southcentral, (800) 422-7554; Northeast, (800) 228-0789; and Southeast (800) 228-0791. Phones will be manned around the clock during the major hunting seasons, and about 15 hours a day at other times.

I approached both men and again asked what happened to the deer that had been in their truck.

"You'll never find the deer," Barretta said. "That blood don't mean nothing. You can't prove a thing."

Knowing we had a strong case, even without the deer carcass, I simply said "Okay," and walked away.

We heard the deep rumble of the wrecker, and soon it pulled up next to the pickup.

"Howdy, Bill," the driver called out. "This the one?" he said, nodding toward the pickup.

"That's it, Curt. Go ahead and load it. Sorry to drag you out so late."

I told Barretta and Ryno I'd call someone to take them home, but they said nothing. Ryno turned and walked toward the truck.

"Where are you going?" I called, walking after him.

"If you're taking the truck, I gotta get something," he said and reached into the cab and grabbed five bottles of beer in a paper bag.

"Is that all you need?" I asked.

"That's it," Ryno said. "We'll walk from here."

"Long walk," I said, knowing they lived more than 50 miles away.

The poachers watched solemnly as the pickup was winched onto the back of the wrecker. Suddenly Barretta turned toward me. "You can't do this," he howled. "That's an \$18,000 truck."

"It's evidence," I said.

The big wrecker disappeared into the night.

"I can't believe you took my truck," Barretta muttered. "What do you want from me?"

"I want to know where the deer is," I said.

Neither Barretta nor Ryno spoke, and for a moment I thought they would tell me. But they said nothing. They just

turned and walked down the dark lane toward State Route 87, carrying their beer as if it were of great value.

Stover, Dailey and I searched a 5-mile area for spent casings or other evidence, but we came up empty. Finally, at 3 a.m., we stopped. Deer season would begin in just a few hours; I knew we'd need some rest.

We charged Barretta and Ryno with 11 Game and Wildlife Code violations. They were convicted on all but one, and they were fined more than \$4,000. Jake Ryno lost his hunting and trapping privileges for four years; Aldo Barretta's were revoked for nine.

Ryno paid his fine within a few weeks, but Barretta was much slower. Eventually he stopped making the time payments he had agreed to and an arrest warrant was issued. Monroe County WCO Dean Beach picked up Barretta and brought him to me. His hair had been cut, but his eyes still had an icy look.

District Justice Patricia A. Robinson gave Barretta an opportunity to make a phone call, then committed him to the county jail. I escorted him there in handcuffs. I walked Aldo Barretta from the back parking lot of the jail to the rear steel door. I pushed the buzzer.

"Yes," a female voice answered.

"Game Commission with a prisoner," I said.

A loud, metallic click indicated the door was now unlocked, and I entered the lobby with my prisoner. I put my service revolver in a steel gun safe under the watchful eye of a jail guard. He opened another door for us.

Barretta and I stepped into the sterile chamber where all new prisoners are inaugurated. I removed the handcuffs and handed the commitment paper to a pair of guards. "You're in luck," one of them told Barretta. "We still have one bed left."

Indian Summer Days

SHALL I SING of Indian summer, its warmth, its beauty, its rejuvenating spirit? What else but song can describe those wonderful halcyon days that occur periodically throughout November and, in recent years, into December as well.

Going by statistics, Indian summer is most likely to appear between Nov. 2 and 6, but lately the bouts of warm weather have continued sporadically until the winter solstice in mid-December. We *should* be having cold and wind, grayness and freezing rain. Instead we continue to have hazy, lazy days that keep me outside from dawn until dusk. It is, as naturalist and writer Henry David Thoreau once noted, "the finest season of the year."

Why or when the phrase "Indian summer" first appeared has been the subject of dispute among scholars. Credit in most dictionaries is given to Major Ebenezer Denny who wrote in his journal of Oct. 13, 1794, "Pleasant weather. The Indian summer here. Frosty nights." The "here" was LeBoeuf, near Erie, and encyclopedia entries identify western Pennsylvania as the place where the term "Indian summer" originated.

However, 16 years earlier John Crevecoeur, who lived in New York state and wrote *Letters from an American Farmer*, mentioned "a short interval of smoke and mildness, called the Indian Summer." And

that is about as far back in literary time as the term can be traced.

We do know that Indian summer became the most popular phrase in 19th century writing to describe a weather phenomenon known for its haziness and high temperatures, which usually occurred after a harsh cold spell dubbed, in sexist terms, "squaw winter." By 1830 even Canadian and English writers had adopted the term.

But why "Indian" summer? Again, contradictory explanations have been offered. The most popular is that the haziness was caused by the smoke from Indian fires. Others claimed that the term referred to the Indians' ability to predict such fine weather.

Less charitable explanations dealt with the Indians' character as seen through the eyes of the white men — Indian summer was as deceptive as the Indians themselves. Or, alternately, Indian summer was the last season of Indian attacks on white settlements.

Still other people believed it was called Indian summer because the warm autumn weather was like a similar phenomenon the colonists had been familiar with in their countries of origin. But since it was just a little different in their new country, they attributed it to Native Americans — Indians as they were then called.

Fine spells of autumn weather have occurred and been noted in many northern countries since the days of

By Marcia Bonta



The Naturalist's Eye

the ancient Greeks. In Greek mythology such weather was considered a gift from the gods to the kingfisher, which they called "halcyon," from which our word for calm, peaceful weather originates. Kingfishers, they believed, built their nests floating on the sea about the time of the winter solstice and were able to charm the winds and sea into calmness until their families were reared — hence the "halcyon" or "kingfisher days" as they called them.

The English distinguish the warm days of October, which they call St. Luke's summer, from the warm days of November, known as St. Martin's summer. The Germans prefer the "summer of old women" and the French, "St. Denis's summer." In Poland such a benign period of weather lasts three to four weeks and is referred to as "God's gift to Poland."

Although we do not know how the term "Indian summer" originated, United States meteorologists have long understood why we have Indian summer weather. According to them, warm air masses move northward from the Gulf of Mexico, causing a strong temperature inversion when they meet a cool, shallow, polar air mass.

This anticyclone, as it is called, concentrates the smoke and dust in the air near the ground, and also brings about a large temperature variation between day and night.

But no matter what its origin or cause, I welcome Indian summer days and gratefully spend them outdoors.

On one such day in early November, I walked into the Far Field thicket to watch the annual antics of American robins and cedar waxwings as they fed — and became inebriated — on the fermented berries of the Hercules clubs. The cedar waxwings' breasts glowed golden in the sunshine, while their yellow tail bands reflected the light. The American robins sang as they fed, but the cedar waxwings just perched and gorged.

I sat down nearby, eager to observe the color and action of one of autumn's best shows on our mountain. Although I did see



a common flicker eating and heard an eastern bluebird call, it was primarily a robin and waxwing sound and light show — their last feast before winter sets in.

Do the old-timers look forward to this drunken binge in late autumn, I wondered? Is there a time when the alcohol content of the berries is perfect? The waxwings managed to retain their staid, unruffled, slick, businesslike demeanor, but the robins resembled bumbling, restless, overgrown schoolboys on their first bar crawl.

Both species fluttered like butterflies as they tried to balance themselves on the tops of the bent-over berry heads to eat. The robins also scratched in the leaves and poked in the earth. Perhaps they didn't believe in drinking on an empty stomach.

In the woods beyond the Far Field, more cedar waxwings were harvesting, but this

time it was wild grapes draped high in the trees. Against the deep blue sky, dozens of cedar waxwings coursed back and forth above me while grapes pattered down like raindrops. A couple European starlings uttering low-pitched growls also joined in the feast.

The longer I sat, the more grapes I saw and the more birds flew in. One tree held at least a dozen waxwings, another several robins, and I could hear an entire flock of starlings somewhere nearby, but the species did not intermingle.

Suddenly, 70 waxwings took off in synchronized flight. I looked up and saw a red-

tailed hawk floating silently below treetop level. Most of the waxwings did not return, but the starlings remained even though the hawk made a second pass overhead, spiraling higher in the sky. Once the hawk was gone for good, though, the waxwings returned and then the starlings took off.

Finally I walked to the second thicket and again found Hercules' club berry heads crowded with dozens of waxwings. Everywhere I looked there were waxwings, probably hundreds all together. Flocking birds seem to be controlled by a single mind because all of them would fly together from berry clump to berry clump, ignoring other clumps that were just as crowded with berries.

Hercules' Club

During this wonderful Indian summer day in the thickets among the wild grapes and Hercules' club, I was reminded of the time I first discovered those latter shrubby trees during an early snow in October. I heard American robins singing and found them and cedar waxwings eating the Hercules' club berries. So intent were they that I was able to sit directly below the 10-foot-high tree they were feeding on, my head less than six feet from the flock.

Later, I learned that Hercules' club (*Aralia spinosa*) has one of the largest compound leaves of any plant, often three feet in length and from two to 2½ feet in width with numerous short-stalked leaflets, each of which are from two to three inches long. In fact, I swear they thud when they hit the ground in early autumn.

During the winter their club-like twigs are particularly noticeable, accounting for their common name, and so are their incredibly stout thorns and prickles, the origin of *spinosa*. Despite this protective armor, white-tailed deer browse heavily on their trunks and stems during the winter — often girdling them as completely as a porcupine would.

They bloom on our mountain in August, huge masses of white blossoms buzzing with bees and other insects. Known also as the "angelica-tree" and "devil's club," they

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Washington, D.C. 20240

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usually grow no more than 10 to 20 feet high, although occasionally trees have been found nearly 40 feet tall with trunks up to 12 inches thick.

Ranging from southern New York to Missouri and south to Florida and Texas, they grow best in well-drained, fertile soils, but often occur on dry and stony slopes — the situation here. Furthermore, on our mountaintop, they grow only on south-facing thickets.

Their abundant black berries provide food for many species of wild birds, but I notice they are usually eaten only after most of the wild grapes, pokeberries and wild black cherries have been eaten. Once the birds start on them, however, it takes only a few days before they have stripped off every berry.

Watching the birds harvest the fruit of Hercules' club is just one of many possible outdoor activities during an Indian summer day. But I must confess that I often sympathize with the sentiments once expressed by novelist Nathaniel Hawthorne in his *American Notebook*. "Indian summer



days," he wrote, "with gentle winds, or none at all, and a misty atmosphere, which idealizes all nature, and a mild, beneficent sunshine, invites one to lie down in a nook and forget all earthly care."

So I find a sheltered spot in the leafless woods and sunbathe, knowing that the days of warmth are fast fleeing.

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SOME 1,000 archers assembled at Ski Round Top in York County for a qualifying shoot of the Archery Shooter's Association's Pro-Am tour. Through such tours, the new association hopes to enhance public interest in archery by making it a spectator sport.

\$pectator \$port?

By Keith C. Schuyler

IT HAD to happen. The Archery Shooter's Association, a group new this year, is attempting to make archery a spectator sport by sponsoring shoots in which substantial cash prizes are awarded, thereby encouraging spectator attendance something on the level of professional golf. Pennsylvania was one six states chosen for an ASA qualifying shoot this year, which led up to a cash-heavy World Championship Classic in Valdosta, GA, in August.

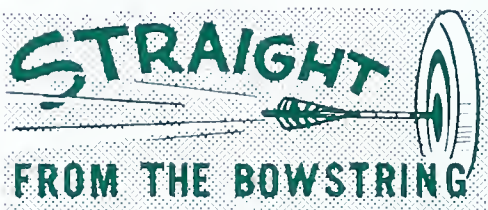
The idea of making archery a spectator sport on the order of golf, tennis or bowling

has been simmering for years. Up until now, it's been difficult to bring top archers together for a shoot where a gallery of people can follow the leaders.

An exception, on a minor scale, was the novelty indoor archery tournament I wrote about in "Outdoors, Indoors" (June). But now, thanks to television outdoor personality Wayne Pearson, archery has wedged its way into the ranks of popular professional sports.

Pennsylvania was a part of ASA's first Easton/Loggy Bayou Pro-Am tour. It was held May 22-23 at Ski Round Top Resort, near Lewisberry.

The site was chosen because ski lanes can be roped off to keep spectators and archers separated while still providing a view of the shooting from as close as 10 to 15 feet. From what I could see, most of the spectators were family members of the archers, but I believe this type of layout will,



in time, attract larger audiences. After all, when the score for one arrow could mean several thousand dollars, interest is bound to improve.

Although there are a number of "ifs" in the process, there is big money to be made. If all classes had been filled at Round Top, the potential payout would have been \$45,000 for men and women in the professional classes, and \$5,725 for men, women and youths in the amateur classes. Top individual purse in the pro classes could've been \$10,000; \$1,400 for the amateurs.

But less than the full slate of professionals (who pay \$250 in entry fees) made it to Round Top, so the payout was less than it could've been. But the prize money was certainly far from shabby. Allen Conner walked away with \$5,200 for first in Men's Pro Class, and Kim Zehr collected \$1,500 for her first place among the women. Pete Works was awarded \$2,800 for men's second place, and Susan Thompson won \$800 for women's second place.

It must be remembered that this was only the group's first try at organizing such a tournament. I would think Pearson, his directors and staff will be able to make a better showing next year.

Pearson — perhaps best known through the ESPN Saturday morning shows "The Outdoor Trail" and "Ultimate Outdoors" — is well-qualified for his role in establishing the new organization, which boasts some 5,000 members. I thought the tournament showed a professional touch, which is needed if archery is to move to this new plane.

Pearson is assisted by Dan Moree, general manager, and a staff of six that comprises W.P. Productions. Both organizations were scheduled to move into new quarters back in June; that ad-

PRIOR to shooting, contestants were required to chronograph their arrows, to make sure their setups satisfied the contest regulations. The maximum arrow speed allowed is 280 feet per second.

dress is Old Valdosta Road, P.O. Box 5078, Nashville, GA 31639.

Individual ASA memberships (required to shoot in its tournaments) cost \$20; family memberships, at \$25, cover all members up to age 18. This also includes membership in the Sunshine Outdoor Sportsman Club, eligibility to win one of 50 some hunting and fishing trips each year.

Professional status is based on whether the archer receives money from a manufacturer. Merely receiving promotional equipment does not make a shooter a professional under ASA guidelines. An amateur may compete in the pro divisions, but a pro cannot compete in the amateur classes. An amateur may move in and out of the pro division at will, but once an amateur gets money from a manufacturer or has amassed \$10,000 in winnings on the ASA trail, he or she is considered a pro.

Qualifying Scores

An amateur's final qualifying score is based on the top three scores in at least three separate qualifier events. A pro's score is based on total score over four qualifier events. ASA competitors may shoot as many qualifying matches as they want.

Ten percent of the total entry money in each class will be paid back to amateurs. Entry fees for amateurs are \$20. In the Pro Division, 100 entries will pay back 15 places; 200 entries, 30 places; 300 entries, 50 places; a full field of 480 entries will pay back 75 places.

ASA has two divisions for junior archers. The youth division is for shooters 12



through 14 years of age; if an archer turns 15 during the season he continues to shoot in the division for that year. Young adults, 15 through 17, are treated in the same manner.

ASA has adopted special rules to meet insurance requirements. The maximum draw weight for bows may not exceed 80 pounds. The maximum arrow speed allowed is 280 feet per second — plus a 3 percent margin of error.

To enforce the latter rule, three chronographs are set up to check each bow before a qualifying tournament. Because of possible variances in chronographs, the lowest reading that can be attained is accepted. Bows that do not qualify must be adjusted.

In addition to the pre-tournament test, the top five winners in each class are again checked after the last target. If a shooter's

bow exceeds the maximum, he is disqualified. Three shooters were disqualified at the Tennessee leg of ASA's tour in April.

All winners must be willing to submit to a polygraph test if any questions arise. Grievances must be accompanied by a \$50 protest fee, and the archer being protested must also submit to a polygraph test.

Amateurs have a variety of classes from which to choose: Men's Open (shoot what you bring); Men's Unlimited (release with fixed pins); Men's Limited (fixed pins, fingers at any point, no releases); Barebow Compound (no sights, fingers at any point, no releases); Traditional: (recurves, longbows, stick bows, no release aid, no sights, no stabilizer, no overdraw, no added weight); Ladies Unlimited (sight, release aid, any points); Ladies Limited (sight, fingers, no release aids); Young Adult (15-17 years of age, shoot what you bring); Youth (12-14 years of age, shoot what you bring).

A safety clinic given by Wayne Pearson before the shoot is required of all participants. Pearson also outlines any special requirements and answers questions. Dan Moree, a Baptist minister, sends shooters off to their targets with an invocation. He also holds a morning church service on the second day of the shoot.

McKenzie 3D targets are set at unknown distances out to 45 yards. Archers shoot in groups of three to six. One arrow is shot from a painted stake which must be touched by some part of the body. White stakes are used for adults, red for young adults and blue for youths.

Time is rarely permitted to look for lost arrows, so archers should carry plenty. This is important since a number of adjacent groups may be shooting simultaneously. While an archer leaving the range may



ARCHERS shot at stations in the woods while spectators watched from the bordering ski trails. The PSE traveling trailer, below, is one of numerous exhibits displaying archery equipment.



DAN MOREE, general manager, and noted ESPN sports personality Wayne Pearson, who is also president of WP Productions, hosted the tournament.

return and complete an unfinished end, he may not make up any missed ends — unless he has equipment problems.

In the case of equipment failure, 45 minutes are permitted to repair or replace the affected gear. The shooter may then shoot the targets he missed in the presence of a tournament official. Only one such occurrence is allowed.

All arrows must remain in the target until they're scored. The arrow shaft must touch the line to be scored. If it is a close call, arrows must stay in the target until judgment has been made. If fletching is not visible, arrow are pushed back for scoring. Pass-throughs or arrows that fail to stay in the target are considered misses. Dropped arrows can be shot, but arrows released from the bow must be scored.

Arrows score 12, 10, 8 or 5. The 12-point mark, a 3/4-inch circle inside the 10-ring, is a new development that makes it possible to pick up two extra points. A bit



of controversy surrounds the 12-point circle because it can be accidentally hit, and some question its location on the target.

Although ski slopes at Round Top were rough (even for this cameraman), shooting was over within 2½ hours each day, pretty good considering more than 1,000 archers participated.

What the future holds for archery's entrance into the world of spectator sports, big prize money and all the related trappings remains a question. But it will certainly be a far cry from the quiet stillness of the deer woods and the uncertainty of each dawning morning where I plan to be this bow season.

Books in Brief...

(Order from the publisher, not from the Game Commission)

Forty-Four Years of the Life of a Hunter, by Meshach Browning, The Pine Creek Historian, Swiss Chalet Lane, Waterville, PA 17776-0067, 420 pp., \$32.50, delivered. Originally published in 1859, this book is essentially the autobiography of Meshach Browning, a man born in Frederick County, MD, in 1781. Much of the book is centered around his hunting exploits in what today is western Maryland, Pennsylvania and West Virginia. But more than just an exciting account of what hunting was like 200 years ago, this also describes what pioneer life was like back when the Alleghenies marked the edge of the frontier. Anybody interested in history, particularly the area around the Youghiogheny River, will thoroughly enjoy and appreciate this book.

Seasons Along the Tiadaghton: An environmental history of the Pine Creek Gorge, by Steven E. Owlett, available from the author at P.O. Box 1032, Wellsboro, PA 16901, 104 pp., \$44.95 hardbound, \$28, softcover, delivered. The stunning color photographs are what first catches the eye in this oversize volume, but the writing is just as crisp and appealing. The author spent 15 years photographing what certainly ranks among the most scenic wild areas in the country. He also obviously spent a lot of time researching the history of the area and the issues affecting Pine Creek today. Visit "The Grand Canyon of Pennsylvania" through the seasons and time with *Seasons Along the Tiadaghton*.



SUCCESS in the deer woods often can be traced to work on the range. Many dedicated hunters develop load/bullet combinations that work well in thier particular firearms, and then practice under a variety of distances.

Deer Cartridges and Bullets

By Don Lewis

Photos by Helen Lewis

“GET BEHIND that big beech tree on the bench below, and I’ll make a wide swing and come down the hollow. Two well-used deer trails meet about a 100 yards below that tree. One comes down the hollow and the other is on the sidehill directly across from the tree. When I make the swing on the other side of the hollow,

deer may come through on either trail,” Bill Nichols explained. “There’s only about two hours of shooting time left, and it will take me an hour to make the circle, but I guarantee you’ll see deer.”

It was the first day of antlerless season several years ago and my first deer hunt with Nichols. I had seen a few deer during the day but didn’t get a shot. Bill had told me about this particular crossing several times and felt there was a good chance of seeing deer. In mid-afternoon, he decided the hollow would be a good spot to finish off the day.

I got to the tree and cleared away the



snow and leaves. A small creek ran about 150 yards below.

Since the hill I was facing was pretty open, I felt I would have a good shot at any legal deer that came down the trail. It would be close to 200 yards, but I had a Ruger No. 1, chambered for the 7mm Mauser, sighted in about three inches high at 100 yards. With the load I was using, and a 175-grain Speer Mag-Tip, I'd be dead-on at 200.

Just as Nichols predicted, after an hour passed I saw a deer well up the hollow. When it stepped into an opening, I checked it with my binoculars to be certain there were no horns. It looked like a big doe, but before I could shoot, it melted into some heavy underbrush and disappeared.

Several minutes passed as I scanned the heavy underbrush 200 yards away. I found no sign of the deer. It had simply vanished. All I could do was wait for Nichols and tell another "couldn't get a clean shot" tale — my third of the day. But just then a doe stepped out into an opening below, and I rested the rifle against a beech tree and fired.

The deer bounded into the brush, and I picked up flashes of it as it ran down the hollow. It was out of sight before I could reload. I couldn't believe I'd missed a broad-side shot at a deer, from a rest, at 100 yards.

When I got to where the doe had been, it was obvious I had connected. I found the doe about 90 yards away. The bullet had hit the right rib cage just behind the shoulder

and exited low on the left rib cage. The exit hole was about the size of an acorn.

I learned a valuable lesson; heavy bullets are not always the wisest choice. The 175-grain Speer Mag-Tip is designed for large animals with heavy bones and thick muscles that offer enough resistance to make the heavy bullet expand. My bullet had passed through the deer without expanding; although I had my deer, it was obvious I was using the wrong bullet.

Ongoing Debates

Debates over which cartridge and bullet weight is best for deer have been going on for decades, and I'm sure they will continue as long as there are deer hunters. I once got a call from a hunter looking for Remington 180-grain bullets for his .300 H&H Mag. When I told him I had 180-grain Western ammo, he said only Remington Core-Lokt bullets would do. He said he'd killed two bucks instantly with shoulder shots, and he referred to this particular bullet as being "magical."

There is no such thing as a magical bullet. Bullets are usually designed for specific purposes. Jacketed hunting bullets are precisely made assemblies of different metals designed to shoot accurately and to perform in a predictable way on impact. Most hunters are aware that big game bullets must expand reliably over a wide range of velocities to assure a quick kill.

Bullets that disintegrate on impact are useless on big game, but some hunters learn



FOR JUST ABOUT any caliber, bullets come in a variety of weights and styles. It's important for the handloader, therefore, to select the proper bullet type for the particular purpose he has in mind. For deer hunting, for example, a handloader should work with bullets designed specifically for thin-skinned big game animals.

that lesson the hard way. For example, a friend was so impressed with a .222 Rem's 50-grain bullet in the pasture fields, he thought it would be ideal for deer. He made 125-yard angling shoulder shot on a standing buck only to see it disappear in the brush.

A few moments later, another hunter shot the buck. My friend learned to his dismay that the 50-grain bullet literally blew up on impact and failed to penetrate.

A big game bullet is designed to expand uniformly under certain situations and, for a bullet to do that, it must meet adequate resistance. The more it expands, the greater the wound volume and the more muscle and tissue damage. A hunter cannot bank solely on a bullet's weight to make the kill. The episode in the beginning of this article is proof of that.

Styles, Shapes & Weights

Bullet styles, shapes and weights can vary significantly in a given caliber. Besides weight, the shooter must also consider style: soft-point, round-nose, spitzer, boattail and pure lead. Each type has a specific use.

The man who based his thinking on two kills with two hits in the shoulder area failed to take into consideration that probably any 180-grain bullet in a .300 H&H Mag. would have been just as effective. A 130-grain bullet from a .270 or a 180-grain bullet from a .30-06 would have given the same results.

Up to a point, the bullet or caliber makes little difference. Shot placement is the key. A bullet passing through both shoulders will normally stop any animal in its tracks.

The ultimate goal of a big game bullet is to give

maximum weight retention with controlled expansion. If a bullet does not retain a high percentage of its original weight, it will not penetrate. This is why bullets designed for thin-skinned varmints are not suitable for deer and bear. Some hunters believe the higher velocities of varmint cartridges will push lightweight 60- to 75-grain bullets into the vital organs, but bullets designed for varmints aren't designed to retain the majority of their lead after impact.

Visit about any deer camp and you're likely to find a wide range of big game cartridges, running from the big magnums down to the 6mms. It's not unusual for each owner to give concrete evidence to back his or her choice of caliber.

Literally any centerfire cartridge that can shoot bullets of 100 grains or more is adequate for deer. For years I believed that the 6mms were inadequate because most bullets of that size were not properly constructed for big game.

That has changed today. Ammunition factories are turning out 6mm bullets designed for controlled expansion and deeper penetration on medium size big game.

Handloaders will find that Speer's 6mm 100-grain boattail offers sufficient penetration and expansion for antelope and white-tailed deer. As another example, Hornady's 100-grain Spire Point and round-nose bullets incorporate an "Innergroove" feature that makes them hang together for better expansion and deeper penetration. Barnes

THE .30-30 reigned as king among deer hunters for decades and, for shots up to 150 yards, is still a fine deer cartridge with either the 150- or 170-grain bullet.



makes excellent 6mm bullets for medium size big game.

The .257 Roberts and the .25-06 Rem. qualify as top deer cartridges. Too many big game hunters think of the .25s as varmint cartridges, but with 117- to 120-grain bullets, either cartridge will perform well on deer. The .257 Roberts is based on the 7mm Mauser case and with deer hunting bullets can generate muzzle velocities above 2,800 fps.

The .25-06 Remington is based on the .30-06 case, and it came into its own once slow burning powders became available. Remington standardized the case in 1969. From my point of view, the .25-06 has a slight edge over the .257 Roberts and qualifies as both a varmint and big game cartridge. Muzzle velocities above 3,450 fps are possible with bullets under 100 grains, and for those in the 117 to 120 range, I've chronographed speeds over 2,875 fps 15 feet from the muzzle.

Pennsylvania's most popular deer cartridges are probably the .30-30 Win., the .308 and .270 Winchesters and .30-06. The .30-30 reigned as king for decades and is a fine 150-yard deer cartridge with either the 150- or 170-grain bullet. With more deer hunters heading for farmlands, however, where longer shots are encountered, the .30-30 has lost ground to more powerful cartridges.

Although it's been around since 1925, the .270 Win. still ranks as one of the finest big game cartridges available. Both the 130- and 150-grain bullets will do an excellent job in the deer woods, and an increasing number of hunters are finding the 140-grain bullets to be a good compromise between these two.

The .308 Win., based on the military 7.62mm NATO, was available as a sport-

12 MOST POPULAR DEER HUNTING CARTRIDGES ACCORDING TO 1985 GAME NEWS SURVEY

Rank	Caliber	Percent
1.	.30-06	34.20
2.	.30-30 Win.	15.46
3.	.308 Win.	9.86
4.	.270 Win.	9.59
5.	.243 Win.	5.55
6.	.35 Rem.	3.92
7.	.300 Savage	3.26
8.	7mm Rem. Mag.	2.61
9.	.32 Special	2.48
10.	.257 Roberts	1.37
11.	6mm Rem.	1.24
12.	8mm Mauser	1.04

ing cartridge in 1952, two years before it was adopted as a military cartridge. Since then it has become increasingly popular among deer hunters, and is now available in nearly all popular sporting arms.

The 7mms

The 7mms (.280 caliber) have been growing in popularity. For years, hunters had only the old 7x57 Mauser cartridge, which made its military debut in 1892. Today, the caliber boasts a number of top deer cartridges including the 7mm-08 Rem., .280 Rem., .284 Win. and the 7mm magnums.

A 1985 *Game News* survey showed the .30-06 to be the top choice among Pennsylvania deer hunters. With its wide range of bullet styles and weights, coupled with the fact that it performs so well and has been made in many fine firearms for a long time, it probably will remain in the top spot for years to come.

In the wind

j. scott rupp



A national fur organization is urging Congress to drop People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals from the Combined Federal Campaign. Under CFC, federal employees, who number about 3.8 million, can make direct payroll contributions to approved CFC charities. The National Board of Fur Farm Organizations wants PETA taken off the list, claiming the group does not meet several criteria for charitable organizations.

The black-necked stilt was recorded nesting in New Jersey for the first time in nearly 200 years. A breeding pair found near Cape May this year was the first known nesting of the species since 1810, reports BWD Skimmer. Delaware, Maryland, Virginia and Pennsylvania all have recorded black-necked stilt nesting in the last 20 years.

An Arkansas court decreed that \$400,000 from a settlement in a water pollution suit will go to improving waterfowl habitat in the drainage where the violation occurred. Three-quarters of the money will restore agricultural acreage back into flooded timber; develop a seasonally flooded wetland impoundment; and acquire critical wetland habitat. The remaining \$100,000 will benefit a state program that teaches high school students the value of water ecosystems.

A bill in the U.S. Senate would increase some federal excise taxes on firearms and ammunition, and divert several categories of Pittman-Robertson funds from state wildlife management programs to health care, says the Wildlife Management Institute. Senate Bill 868 would more than double the tax on handguns to 25 percent; more than double the tax on some semi-auto centerfires and some ammo to 25 percent; and increase the federal firearms license fee from \$30 to \$2,500. These tax receipts would then be channeled into a health care fund for gunshot victims. The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service estimates the total P-R revenue loss to states would be \$61.5 million.

A Montana court has ruled that the state's hunter harassment law infringes on the right of free speech. The ruling stems from a 1990 incident in which a protester stepped in front of a hunter's loaded rifle during a bison hunt. Montana's wildlife agency intends to appeal the judge's decision.

Stellwagen Bank, a popular Massachusetts whale-watching spot, has been designated a national marine sanctuary, reports *Defenders*. The 19-mile long submerged sand deposit is the country's 12th such sanctuary and New England's first.

President Clinton will order the executive branch to buy paper with a recycled content as high as 20 percent by next year and as high as 30 percent by 1998. At press time, the Wall Street Journal said the executive order would be signed shortly. The decision should strengthen the recycled paper market; the federal government buys 1 to 2 percent of all paper made in the U.S.

**Answers: O, N, P, R, M, A, S, T, S.
SPORTSMAN**

1993 WATERFOWL STAMP

“Dawdling Dabblers”

CONSERVATION

Each year the Commission offers for sale a voluntary waterfowl conservation stamp. Profits from these sales are used for wetland acquisition, habitat development and



waterfowl-related education programs. This year's design features a pair of northern shovelers by York artist Glen Reichard.

COLLECTOR VALUE

The stamps have great collector value because editions are available for a limited time only; stamps remaining after two years are destroyed. The 1991 stamp will be destroyed after Dec. 31.

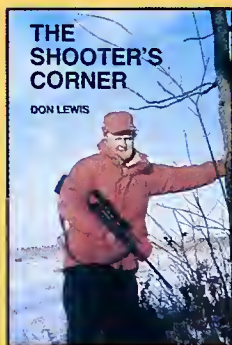
COST

Stamps cost \$5.50 each, \$22 for a plate block of four and \$55 for a full sheet of 10. When you purchase five or more full sheets (any available editions), the price drops to \$40 per sheet. Prices include delivery. Pennsylvania residents add 6 percent sales tax.

Waterfowl conservation stamps are available at all Commission offices and wildlife management areas, and at participating license issuing agents and stamp dealers. Limited edition signed prints are available from art dealers and galleries.



Books

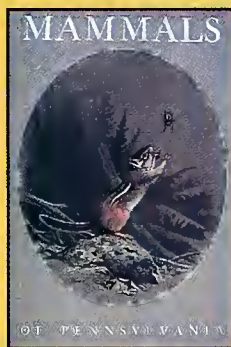


The Shooter's Corner by Don Lewis is a 449-page hardcover detailing nearly every facet of the shooting sports.
Price: \$15

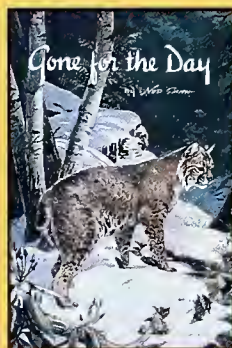
Pennsylvania Big Game Records, 1965-1986, lists the state's official trophy deer and bear records, along with many stories of exciting hunts.
Price: \$10



Birds of Pennsylvania, a 214-page hardcover by James and Lillian Wakeley, details birds most commonly found here, plus information on their biology and behavior.
Price: \$10

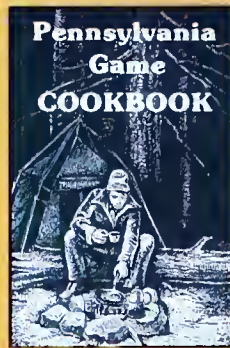


Mammals of Pennsylvania by J. Kenneth Doult et al profiles the state's mammals — from voles and shrews to bear and deer — along with their roles in state history.
Price: \$4



Gone for the Day is a compilation of Game News columns written and illustrated by famed wildlife artist and naturalist, the late Ned Smith.
Price: \$4

Pennsylvania Game Cookbook is a collection of nearly 200 recipes for cooking popular, and not so popular, game animals.
Price: \$4



All prices include handling and postage. Pennsylvania residents add 6 percent sales tax. Make check or money order (no cash, please) payable to Pennsylvania Game Commission, Dept. MS, 2001 Elmerton Ave., Harrisburg, PA 17110-9797. Be sure to ask for a complete list of the agency's paid and free publications.

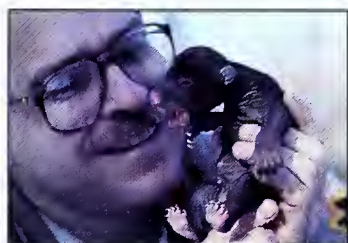
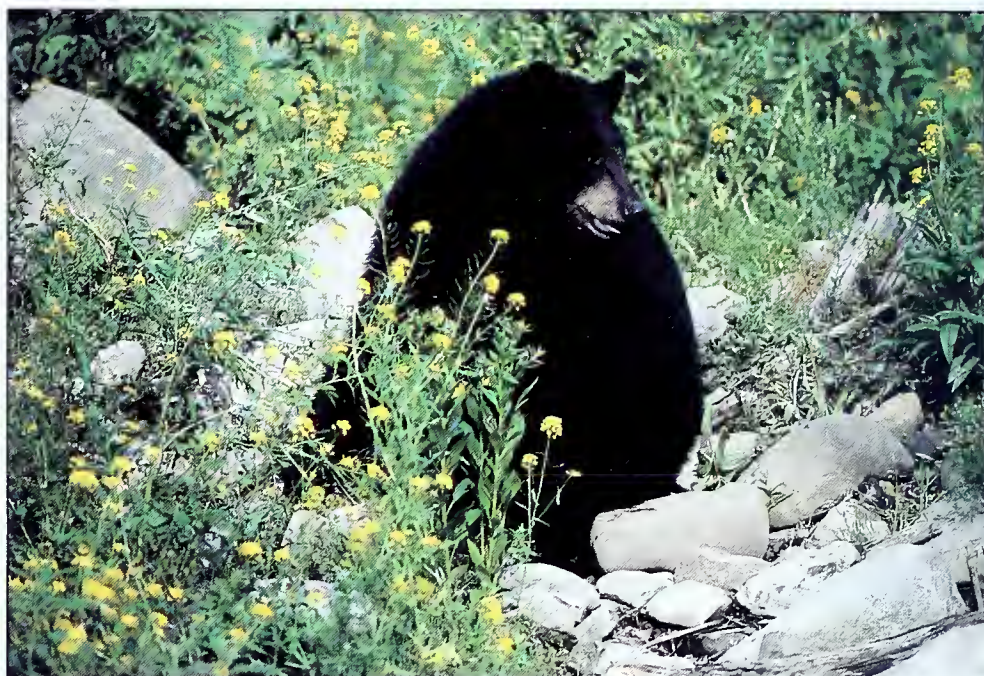
PENNSYLVANIA GAME NEWS

DECEMBER 1998

ONE DOLLAR



On the Trail . . .

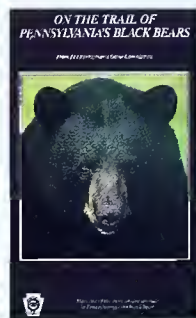


HIKE ALONG with Game Commission Biologist Gary Alt as he explores the fascinating world of one of our most impressive mammals. In "On the Trail of Pennsylvania's Black Bears," Alt and PGC

videographer Hal Korber follow the animal through the phases of its life and the seasons of the year. This award-winning video, years in the making, documents bear behavior never before captured on film.

"On the Trail of Pennsylvania's Black Bears" (running time 100 minutes) costs just \$29.95, delivered. Pennsylvania residents add 6% sales tax. Order from:

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PENNSYLVANIA GAME NEWS (ISSN 0031-451X) is published monthly for \$9 per year, \$25.50 for three years (Pennsylvania residents add 6% sales tax), or membership in Pennsylvania's Cooperative Farm-Game Project or Safety Zone Project; to Canada and all other foreign countries, \$10 U.S. currency, per year. Published by the Pennsylvania Game Commission, Harrisburg, PA. Phone (717) 787-4250. Second-class postage paid at Harrisburg, Pa. CHANGE OF ADDRESS: POSTMASTER: Send both old and new addresses to Pennsylvania Game News, 2001 Elmerton Ave., Harrisburg, PA 17110-9797. Allow six weeks for processing. Material accepted is subject to our requirements for editing and revising. Author payment covers all rights and title to accepted material, including manuscripts, photographs, drawings and illustrations. No information contained in this magazine may be used for advertising or commercial purposes. Opinions expressed here do not necessarily reflect those of the Pennsylvania Game Commission. Copyright © 1993 by the Pennsylvania Game Commission, an Equal Opportunity Employer, the programs of which are all administered consistent with the goals and objectives of Affirmative Action. All rights reserved.

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Editorial

One More Tool

BALANCING DEER NUMBERS with agricultural interests has always been a fundamental goal of deer management. And over the years, as deer have become more common around farms, an increasing array of options to minimize and alleviate crop damage has been instituted. Farmers have long been allowed to shoot depredating deer, and for many years the agency has provided free fencing materials to farmers. Bonus deer, free fence installation, and then the extended season just for farms where deer damage persists are programs instituted in recent years to provide farmers with more options to alleviate deer crop damage.

These strategies have worked well. But places remain where deer damage is still a problem. Most often, uncontrollable deer damage can be traced to a lack of hunter access, where neighboring properties are either closed to hunting or so developed that hunting is not possible.

Neither the Game Commission nor the affected farmers has any control over these access problems. But on properties where some sort of hunting remains a viable option, the Game Commission is seriously looking at instituting some sort of deer depredation permit system.

This idea is still in the planning stage. Many decisions and procedural refinements must be made before — or even if — such a program is put into place. Nonetheless, we're certain many readers would be interested in learning just what is being considered at this time.

Only farmers who are unable to solve their deer damage problems through public hunting and participation in the Deer Damage Area program will be eligible for the deer depredation program.

The Game Commission will determine the number of permits issued. Farmers will be able to control who and how many hunters they allow on their farms.

Generally, when the depredation permits would be valid will depend upon the needs of the farmer or, more specifically, the type of crop damage involved. Hunters with permits will be limited to one deer a day, and only antlerless deer would be legal. Spotlighting, or shooting deer at night, would not be permissible.

How the number of permits will be determined and then issued; how crop damage will be assessed; tagging and reporting procedures; and permit cost are just some of the details still being discussed.

The relationship between deer and agriculture is more complex than ever before. And many of the overriding sociological and land-use issues, such as hunter access and urban sprawl, are largely beyond the realm of the agency and affected landowners. Deer will always be causing problems, not just on farms, but on highways, around parks and suburban developments, and every other place they're found, too. But handled properly, some sort of deer depredation permit system program holds the potential to provide more relief to more farmers, all while taking into full account the needs of sportsmen and — most importantly — the white-tailed deer. In essence, a deer depredation permit system appears to be the next logical step on the road to better deer management around the farm. — *Bob Mitchell*

Letters

Editor:

The statement “aren’t we all working toward the same thing,” made by a friend after I showed him the letter degrading the streambank fencing program, brought home a bigger issue. Sportsmen should be banding together to support conservation issues and policies. Now, more than ever, our rights as hunters and gun owners are in peril. We should be putting our petty differences aside and work together to preserve the rights we hold dear.

K.J. HEFFNER,
WILKES-BARRE

Editor:

I hope not many people agree with the criticisms expressed in a letter about streambank fencing published in October. It’s sad to learn there are people who can’t see the benefits of keeping cows out of our streams. Because cows have been going into streams for hundreds of years is no excuse for not fencing them out, especially because it’s such a simple way to eliminate such widespread damage. There are many of us who hope the program continues to prosper.

B.M. SNEERINGER,
HANOVER

Editor:

I think your magazine would be more interesting

and informative if some of your pictures would be in color. Give it a try. I’m sure the readers would like it.

A. MASONIS,
DUBOIS

Editor:

The letter about posting in your September issue seems to reflect the attitude that those who have lost the privilege of hunting someone else’s land are entitled to considerations from the landowner. Quite the opposite is true. The landowner is the one who pays the mortgage, taxes, insurance, upkeep, etc.

When we bought our land years ago, we allowed hunting. Each year problems became worse until we just had to post.

Private property is just that: private. It is the owner’s decision to allow hunting or not. There is no need to strain hunter relations further. In all respects: Hunting is a privilege, not a right.

A. MCTIEG,
CLARKS SUMMIT

Editor:

Regarding the letter about posting, I don’t know whether I’m more upset with the writer or *Game News* for publishing it.

First, landowners are not impossible to locate. Names and addresses are available at county real estate tax offices. Second, hunting is a privilege, not a right.

Remember, the land-

owner did something nobody else did — pay more for the land than anybody else would.

M.P. MESSINGER,
BENTON

Editor:

In response to the suggestion of paying a \$1 tax for a “No Trespassing” sign, I will pay the tax, but propose that trespassers be fined \$2,500, lose their hunting license privileges, take a course in reading, and perform two years’ service repairing fences, taking down tree stands, picking up litter, leveling ruts in fields, etc.

P.B. RYDZIK,
SIMPSON

Editor:

I was surprised to read in your “1993 Season Forecast” that muskrats are an underutilized furbearer. In my 40 some years of trapping, I’ve never seen muskrat populations as low as they’ve been the past few years. Streams that trappers once argued over have hardly any muskrats today. Although I’ve been looking for new places to trap, I haven’t found any with a good population, and I refuse to trap the last of the animals on streams where they are scarce.

B. BAILY,
ELIZABETHTOWN

Editor:

Currently, I am not a hunter, but I strongly

support hunters, especially the "good" hunters described in your October editorial. Our farm has always been open, and while we've had litter to clean up and some other problems, such experiences do not justify any negative feelings for the many upstanding hunters I know.

Evidently you have some reason to state that school teachers are telling students "about the evils of guns or the horrors of the hunt." I have been teaching for 29 years in a district with well over 300 teachers. As a chemistry teacher, I tell my students to learn to handle chemicals with the same maturity and respect they should have when they handle guns or drive cars. Each of my three children has completed 12 years of public schooling, and I have never heard of any anti-hunting sentiment from an educator.

J. BOOK,
IRWIN

Editor:

For years a group of us from Rhode Island has enjoyed October bowhunting in Elk County. Being able to take either a buck or a doe made for an exciting hunt.

The 1993 rule change requiring a doe permit has changed that. Doe permits were long gone before they got to us "out of staters."

How about a little more consideration for your guests? Other states set aside 10 to 20 percent of

their doe permits for nonresidents.

We understand that it is your state, but we do pay more than a few expenses with our nonresident hunting fees. We still love ya anyway.

D. ROBINSON
BARRINGTON, RI

Editor:

With the new regulations for obtaining antlerless deer permits, muzzleloader hunters really took it on the chin. Unlike archers, the flintlock hunter had to forfeit his doe license application, so the only way he could hunt for a second deer was with a bonus license, which were scarce due to the archers needing a doe permit.

I feel muzzleloader hunters should have the same opportunities to obtain a doe permit as anyone else. Even nonresident hunters may apply before resident muzzleloader hunters! Unless they were extremely lucky to have obtained a bonus license, the muzzleloading sportsman very likely will be the only hunters in 1993 unable to harvest two deer.

J.E. MELIUS,
HARRISVILLE

Editor:

I thoroughly enjoyed "The Hunter's Moon" in the October issue. It was very enlightening and

should be appreciated by all who are interested in our past and future.

F.R. SAUNDERS
SHARPSBURG, MD

Editor:

For the past few year, my good friends have made the *Game News* a Christmas gift, and I thoroughly enjoy it. I especially like the artwork you feature on your covers and inside. I like these more than photographs because artwork reflects the artist's spirit, and there's always more in the drawing than is apparent at first glance.

D. HIGHLANDS,
PITTSBURGH

Editor:

Unable to get an antlerless deer tag, I could hunt only antlered deer this year. That's okay. Our week was delightful. We saw plenty of deer and some beautiful country. I heard complaints about the new system, though, so, as a wildlife biologist, I wanted to offer Pennsylvanians an outsider's perspective.

Thanks to tight control, progressive harvest regulations and a large number of hunters, Pennsylvania has one of the best managed deer herds east of the Mississippi. I'm confident that though some may find the new system awkward at first it will yield excellent results.

A.L. FOOTE, Ph.D.
LAFAYETTE, LA

**Your comments are welcome. Mail them to "Letters,"
2001 Elmerton Ave., Harrisburg, PA 17110-9797.
Letters will be edited for brevity and clarity.**

Last Minute Buck

By Paul A. Matthews

WHEN I CAME TO THE EDGE of the pines I stopped. The deer were in there. Their tracks in the snow at my feet were mute evidence. The problem was, after they got into the pines would they turn and go uphill to my left, or would they head downhill to my right?

I was almost certain they would not go straight ahead, because the land ahead was an open field containing a farmhouse, barn and outbuildings. In 50 years of hunting the area, I'd never known deer to be pushed across this field when they had other options.

It was 4:25, nearly dark and snowing hard; big wet flakes clung to everything they touched. I ran my finger along the rifle barrel to sweep off the ridge of snow and clear the peep sight. And then I made my decision. Downhill, I guessed, along the lower edge of the pines. If I guessed right, the deer would head for the shelter of Mallory Run. And maybe, just maybe, within the next few remaining minutes of daylight, I'd spot the buck.

With my rifle at a low port, I eased downhill along the trail that skirted the lower edge of the pines. I picked my way slowly, probing the deepening gloom ahead for any sign of deer. And as I came up over a slight knoll, there ahead of me . . .

When I left the house at noon that day, the sun was shining through a wintry haze. The temperature was on the low side of freezing and there wasn't enough air movement to wiggle a feather — an almost perfect day for prowling the

THAT'S THE KIND of deer hunting I like — working slowly through heavy cover in hopes of jumping a buck within range of my .45-70.



hemlocks and laurel and thornapple along Mallory Run.

That's the kind of deer hunting I like. Working slowly through the brush, one step at a time, in hopes of jumping a buck within range of my .45-70.

Ten minutes from home the sun faded and fine grits of snow began to dribble through the gaunt branches of the hardwoods. Within half an hour the woods were transformed into a wonderland scene of cotton-white softness that muffled each footstep to a whisper.

At three o'clock I was two miles from home, hunkered down on my heels, resting beneath the drooping branches of an old hemlock. The deer were apparently lying low; I hadn't seen so much as a fresh track. I'd zigzagged uphill and down, and poked into every spot I figured a buck might be hiding. But the area seemed as bare as Mother Hubbard's cupboard.

I thought of the woods on the

opposite side of the creek — patches of brush pine, acres of massive oaks and hemlocks, an occasional small patch of thornapple — a good area with adequate browse. And snow or not, if deer were going to feed before dark they were going to start within the next 15 or 20 minutes.

As a matter of habit, I blew through the aperture on the peep sight, made sure the chamber held a cartridge, and headed downhill across Mallory Run.

On the opposite side of the creek, I struck an old logging trail. I followed it uphill for a couple hundred yards when I spotted a small doe nibbling at the tender shoots that poked upward through the snow. I stopped, and then committed the deer hunter's most common sin.

I kept my eye on the doe. Watched her feed down the trail toward me until, 20 yards away, she suddenly raised her head and stared at me.

In the swirling snow, she wasn't certain. Her ears swiveled for sound and



AT FIRST THE WOODS seemed empty, but then I saw the first deer, broadside in the trail directly ahead of me. It was a big doe, staring straight at me. Then I saw the little doe a bit beyond it. But where was the buck?

her nose twitched for scent. She raised her forefoot and brought it down with a muffled thump. Seconds later she bolted, and only then did I see the buck and other doe that had been feeding just off the trail within easy range of my rifle. I had blown it.

Within fractions of a second they were swallowed up in the snow and timber, leaving me cold, wet and frustrated. Still, they had headed in the same direction I wanted to go, so I got on their tracks and followed.

Now I'd followed deer tracks before, usually without much success. But when it's the last hour and a half of the day and the game is headed toward camp or home, there's little to be lost by trying.

One of the things I'd learned years ago when trailing deer was not to push too hard. Walk slow and easy and give the deer plenty of time to relax. This I did, barely watching the tracks at my feet, but keeping my eyes focused as far ahead as possible for sign of a flicking tail or a deer standing motionless as it watched its backtrail.

They didn't run far before settling down to a slow, steady pace. Their tracks led uphill through slashings left by old timbering operations, and I followed them downhill through thickets of laurel that soaked me with heavy snow. And then they straightened out as though with a single purpose and paralleled Mallory Run.

As the day waned and light began to fade, the intensity of the snow increased. Every few minutes or so I checked the aperture of the peep sight to see that it was clear of snow, and I subconsciously swung the rifle to my shoulder to make certain I could still see that big 1/8-inch post front sight. It was an excellent sighting system for close-in shooting.

One thing I soon noticed was that nowhere along the way did the deer stop and stand to watch their backtrail. And because of this, I had to believe that the little doe really hadn't seen or winded me, but was merely suspicious. The buck

Cubed Deer Meat with Rice

Ingredients:

1 1/2 lbs. cubed meat

flour seasoned with salt & pepper

oil or melted shortening

1 pkg. Lipton's dry onion soup mix

1 can cream of mushroom soup

1 can sliced mushrooms

water

Shake cubed meat in seasoned flour to coat well. Brown in hot oil in skillet with lid. Add onion soup mix and enough water to barely cover meat. Simmer until meat is tender and liquid is considerably reduced. Add cream of mushroom soup and mushrooms, stirring to blend. Heat to serving temperature. Serve over hot cooked rice or noodles. If desired, the meat can be cut into half-inch strips about two inches long and follow cooking instructions above, using only 1/2 can of mushroom soup and adding 1/2 cup sour cream for a stroganoff-type dish.

FROM PENNSYLVANIA GAME COOKBOOK,
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and other doe had simply followed her when she bolted.

This gave me some hope and a twinge of excitement. If the deer really didn't suspect I was behind them, I stood a chance. It would be mostly a matter of being in the right place at the right time.

I fought down the urge to hurry, to get as close to the deer as possible before they suddenly decided to change course. I knew that when they changed course I'd have to leave the track and head for home. As it was, it would still be after dark before I got there.

But their tracks stretched out ahead of me, threading across an overgrown basin that held the remnants of an ancient farmhouse and one or two time-gnarled apple trees. The unbroken snow showed that the deer had not stopped and pawed

for late fallen apples, but were pushing ahead for cover.

Again fighting the urge to hurry, I saw the pine patch not far ahead: If the deer were going to stop, even momentarily, it would be there. Slow and cautious would be the order of the day.

At the edge of the pines, I stopped. The deer went in there; I could tell by their tracks. But had they stopped? Or had they already left? Would they go uphill to my left toward the vast expanse of Buckhorn Mountain, or would they turn downhill toward Mallory Run and the shelter of massive, low hanging hemlocks?

Then I asked myself what I would do if I was in their situation — and didn't suspect I was being followed?

That one factor made all the difference in the world. If I suspected I was being followed, I would head straight uphill through tangles of laurel. But if I was not being followed, I'd head for the shelter of the hemlocks that were downhill a short distance away. I had to believe the deer would figure it the same way.

Only a few minutes of shooting time remained. I eased downhill along the trail I knew skirted the lower edge of the pines. The snow was deep and quiet, muffling any misstep on a shifting stone or snapping branch. Still I was careful, taking one slow step at a time while my eyes probed into the swirling gloom.

The trail dipped into a shallow depression where it forked, with one branch going down into the creek bed and the other bearing left around the

pin. I swung to the left, following for maybe a hundred feet or so where I came up over a knoll.

At first the woods seemed empty. Then I saw the first deer, broadside in

the trail directly ahead of me. In the last vestiges of daylight, it was little more than a dark form, but I could see it was a doe, a big one, looking straight at me.

Then I saw the small doe a bit beyond the large one. She had already crossed the trail and was standing by a clump of dogwood, looking back over her shoulder.

Where was the buck? Had he parted from the doe? Or was he hanging back to make certain the coast was clear?

My eyes swiveled to the uphill side of the trail, reaching as far ahead as I could see. No buck. Then I spotted him, right at the edge of the trail, closer to me than either of the two doe.

He was standing behind some briers. His head and rack were visible, and fortunately his chest area was also in the clear. I don't even remember slipping the safety off, but once I had identified the buck, the little rifle automatically found my shoulder and the heavy slug was on its way.

For a moment the deep gorge echoed and re-echoed with the sound of the shot, and then the snow and the darkness closed in, drawing a blanket over the form of the buck lying on the far side of the briers. I knelt down beside him and checked my watch.

Four thirty-one. Legal shooting hours had just ended.



SNOW AND DARKNESS covered the form of the buck lying on the far side of the briers. I checked my watch: legal hours had just ended.

***HYPOTHERMIA:* A Deadly Killer**

By Francis X. Sculley

FOUR YOUTHS spent an uncomfortable night on a ledge near the top of Vermont's Mt. Mansfield a few years ago. It was mid-July, and even atop the state's highest peak the temperature was in the high 50s. So there was little danger that any of the quartet could suffer any ill effects, despite the fact it rained the entire night.

Nonetheless, they were all hospitalized — due to “exposure,” said the area newspapers. Oddly enough, one of the youngsters, who wore but a nylon sleeveless shirt during the ordeal, was near death upon his arrival at the hospital.

Hypothermia is hardly a household word; few people can even spell it, but it is now a known fact that the sudden loss of body heat is responsible for many outdoor deaths once blamed on heart attacks, drownings and other accidents.

The word almost defines itself: “hypo” meaning beneath standard, and thermo referring to degree of heat. Put them together, and the ailment known as hypothermia means “below average heat.” Strangely enough, some of the most serious cases of this age-old ailment occur in temperatures of 30 to 50 degrees. Loss of body heat can be greatly accelerated by high winds, driving rain, or a combination of both.

The main symptom is persistent and uncontrollable shivering. It should never be



ignored. Fatigue, faintness and even hunger pangs also go along with the onset of hypothermia. Finding a name for their suffering may be small comfort to many GIs who shivered and shook through a four-hour tour of guard duty on some lonely outpost. The spectre of the guardhouse and the Articles of War were a deterrent to the worst case of the ailment.

Hypothermia can attack anybody who heads outdoors, particularly those who infrequently take to the woods and are ill-prepared. Hunger, fatigue and alcohol consumption will increase susceptibility. Remember this when you take to the woods on the first morning of deer season after an all-night poker session, with too many cans of suds under your belt.

Whenever heading afield, take protective clothing — temperatures can drop suddenly even in summer, particularly in mountainous regions. Dressing in several layers slows heat loss by trapping it between layers.

Remember that wool — even when wet — retains more insulation value than cotton or synthetic fabrics. Jeans are not advised, unless you feel that you are in top condition and it is not going to drop below 55. A word of warning for those who wear denim for almost everything: it admits water and lets heat out.

The moment your body begins to lose heat faster than it produces it, hypothermia threatens. As heat loss continues, the temperature of the body's inner core falls below normal. Hands and feet are affected first. When body temperature drops to 95 degrees, dexterity is reduced to where one cannot open a jackknife or strike a match.

Shivering begins when the inner core temperature drops 2.5 degrees and the

more it drops, the less efficient the brain becomes. You may have all the equipment necessary to save yourself — additional warm, dry clothes, fire-starting materials and so forth — but be unable to function well enough to make use of them, or even know that you have the means to get warm.

When your temperature drops to 94 you will stop shivering, and begin almost spasmodic, uncontrollable shaking. Your system, getting rid of carbon dioxide and lactic acid, also releases blood sugar and adrenalin, giving you the surge of energy to create the quaking. This is nature's warning that the victim is in desperate trouble and immediate aid is necessary.

Death can result within 1½ hours after the shaking starts. In fact, rescuers may be unable to get a fire going fast enough to save the unfortunate victim's life.

Remember, the head has a very rapid heat loss if unprotected, which in some measure accounts for the incoherency of victims found hatless. Make cer-

tain that your "noggin" is covered.

For those who scoff at this outdoor hazard, I'd like to refer back to August 1959, when Alfred Whipple Jr., age 20, and his buddy, Sidney Couch Jr., just 21, were stranded on Cannon Mountain in New Hampshire. While rescuers were on the way, a heavy rain and strong winds closed in on the mountain. Before the youths, clad in summer garb, could be reached, they perished. The diagnosis: "Exposure to non-freezing cold."

It is now believed that many unexplained drownings are the result of hypothermia. Those who insist on skinny-dipping in early April should heed this warning.

Hypothermia is deadly because it is so



DON'T BE FOOLED by seemingly mild temperatures. Hypothermia can occur when it's as warm as the 50s if heat-robbing rain and high winds prevail.

FOOD is essential to maintaining body temperature, so carry high energy snacks every time you head for the woods.

stealthy and insidious. Who can't recall shivering while watching a football game in a driving rain, or after a quick trip out to the garage in shirt sleeves during windy, damp weather?

Children and those in poor condition are the most vulnerable. Wear warm clothing, and do not expose yourself to driving rain and high winds for long periods of time, even during July and August. Get under cover quickly. Recognize the symptoms in yourself and others, and by all means heed them.

Eat heartily, get plenty of rest and keep dry. Avoid the temptation to wear light clothing on a balmy February afternoon. It could be fatal. Always carry high energy snacks in your jacket. Bear in mind it need not be 20 below nor even 20 above to encounter this danger.

Hypothermia can be fatal, but those



who use their heads shouldn't have to worry about it. And remember one more thing, an elderly person can perish of hypothermia even in his or her home. So don't forget to check on your senior citizen neighbors when the winter winds blow.

The danger is real.

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Snowshoe Doe

Last year's heavy snow before the antlerless season called for some unconventional, or at least unfamiliar, tactics.

By Bob Noonan

I'M SURE many sportsmen will remember the 1992 doe season for a long time. A couple of days before it opened, a major snowstorm whopped the whole state. In Jefferson County, where I was planning to hunt, the snow was well over hip deep.

I had moved from Maine to Pennsylvania the previous year and had received an invitation to hunt doe from an acquaintance's camp. We all met at the head of the half-mile long camp road at noon on the Sunday before the opener. Of course the road was snowed shut, so we carried in all the gear for a party of 19 on our backs. That's a story in itself.

When I had moved from Maine I'd debated leaving my three pairs of snowshoes behind. Now I was glad we had them with us. They were the Michigan style, slightly upturned at the toe, 13 inches wide at the foot, and 48 inches long, tapering to a tail. They were designed for deep snow travel.

After getting everything to camp and unpacked, I strapped the shoes back on to do some scouting. I knew the deer wouldn't be using their usual runs.

I like the shuffling cadence of snowshoeing; lift one knee high until the shoe tip is clear of the ground, let your toe flop loose and point down, swing the shoe forward and let it drop, then move the next one. Trying to hold up or maneuver the shoe with the tip of your foot makes it unmanageable, causes falls and soon wears out your legs. Snowshoeing often seems difficult at first, but once you've got the feel it's surprisingly easy.

I had often hunted and trapped on snowshoes in Maine, but it had been a few years. I'd forgotten how quickly and easily you can cover ground with them. In no time I had climbed the open hardwood hillside behind camp and turned to follow the ridge. I much prefer snowshoes to skis; they're more maneuverable and easier to turn, and you can negotiate much rougher terrain with them, climbing right over snow covered brush piles, thickets, logs, bogs and other obstacles.

I saw no deer tracks for the first half-mile, which didn't surprise me. The usual feeding places had been abandoned — the nuts, leaves and small brush buried under the snow.

I left the ridge to circle a small field and finally found tracks, a deep furrow headed downhill in a straight line. The deer were struggling,

their bellies dragging as they traveled in short leaps. There were two, a larger one breaking trail and a smaller one following in its tracks, probably a doe and her young of the year.

They obviously had a destination in mind, and I had a good idea what it was. I've seen this behavior in Maine many times right after the first deep snow.

Up to Two Feet

Deer can handle snow up to about two feet deep. Beyond that, food is covered too deeply and they can no longer walk freely. They have to bound to travel, and that uses too much energy. When the snow depth is two feet or more, deer are in trouble.

When this happens in Maine and other northern areas, deer seek out large areas of continuous overhead evergreen cover, usually cedar, spruce or fir swamps. Under such cover, the snow is shallower, food more accessible and the wind less severe. Sometimes hundreds of deer will gather together in these locations, called deer yards.

Deer will travel long distances to find a yard; when I was trapping in Maine I commonly came across deer tracks traveling in

a straight line after the first snow, and I followed some of them over two miles to a yard.

I was sure these two Pennsylvania deer were doing the same thing, looking for evergreen cover. I knew there were hemlocks along the stream behind camp, and there might be more in the flats the stream ran into a few miles away.

Sure enough the tracks dropped into the creek bottom, then turned to follow it downstream. There were scattered hemlocks here, but no continuous cover, just isolated clumps or large single trees. The dark green branches reached right down into the snow.

I poked my head through some and looked into a dim, open circular room three or four feet high, with the trunk in the center. A perfect sanctuary up under the branches, it was impossible to see into, with only a few inches of snow on the ground inside. It would turn any wind, and probably even hold some heat.

Shortly the two deer took advantage of one of the hemlocks, and bedded down briefly inside before moving on. I started watching the hemlocks ahead of me for movement.

Pretty soon I crossed more tracks, this time a larger group. They were meandering like deer do when feeding, so I followed them. They moved up onto a hardwood hillside on which a few trees had been taken for timber.

A number of fresh maple treetops lay on the ground, the branches sticking up out of the snow, and the deer moved right into them and fed heavily on the tips. It was probably the only food available. The snow among the branches was all flattened down and littered with droppings.

I followed this group back to another large hemlock, and counted five beds up under the branches, three of them small. It looked like a group of two does and their young of the year.

WHEN TRAILED, deer tend to run ahead, and then stop to look back — usually from cover. The animal waits until the hunter gets too close before running again.



I followed them to some more tops, then to another hemlock, then out again. The pattern was obvious, and very repetitious; feed, rest and chew their cuds under the cover, then feed again.

Finally I jumped them. I never saw them go, but their tracks showed me they'd gotten up out of their beds and milled around watching me approach, then bolted out the back, leaping separately up an incline. Then they regrouped and hid under another hemlock.

I followed, and the whole act was repeated again. They were safe under those trees, and they knew it. I decided to stop. It was getting dark, and I wanted them nearby the next morning.

One time-honored north woods deep snow hunting technique is to get on the track of a single deer and stay on it relentlessly. You move fairly steadily, stopping frequently to look ahead for a possible shot. You're not really trying to catch the deer unaware. The idea is to push the animal steadily and persistently.

You'll keep catching up with the deer and jumping it. It will run ahead, then stop to look back over its trail, usually from cover. It will see you before you see it and take off again each time you get too close to the animal.

The first dozen or so times you jump the deer you probably won't see it. Gradually it will get tired, especially in deep snow, and you'll start jumping it more often. Sooner or later, the deer will let you get a look at it. Sometimes it will pause briefly at the edge of the cover before taking off, sometimes it will actually stop to look back in plain sight. Maybe it's tired or curious about what's following it.

Charlie Yanish, a friend of mine from Maine who has killed a number of big bucks this way, believes they get angry at being hounded and want to confront their tormentor.

Whatever the reason, if you're persistent the chances are good you'll eventually get a clear standing shot.

This method works best with bucks because they're apt to be solitary and tend to leave other deer when pressed. Does, however, tend to double back and hang with the group.

I've spent many hours tracking does in the snow and had them circle back and rejoin the scattered group, split up, then circle and regroup again in one small area of thick cover — until the whole place was

tracked up like a barnyard and I couldn't begin to untangle which deer went where anymore. I have gotten deer this way, maybe not the original one I was tracking, but it tasted just the same.

To do this under normal snow and hunting conditions here in Pennsylvania, I'd be afraid of just pushing the deer past another hunter. But with

the unusually deep snow we had last year, I didn't think I'd find many hunters this far from camp.

The next morning, this time carrying my Remington Model Seven 7mm-08, I picked up the tracks again. I followed them as the deer apparently fed across the hillside. Eventually, I cut three fresh tracks, one obviously from the previous night.

In the older tracks, the disturbed snow was stiff and crusty from hours in the cold, but the new ones were very fresh, the snow loose and soft. I turned and followed them. They went several hundred yards up over the hill and disappeared under a hilltop grove of about 20 small hemlocks and other brush.

I circled it, and behind it I found three fresh tracks bounding away. I had jumped them, and they were only minutes ahead of me.

I followed and put them up again after going only 200 yards. They started to circle back. I didn't really want them joining up

***In the older tracks,
the disturbed snow
was stiff and crusty
from hours in the
cold, but the new
ones were very
fresh, the snow
loose and soft.***

with the other group, so I shuffled along their trail as fast as I could go, to break them up and possibly cut one out by itself.

It worked perfectly. When I jumped them this time they exploded out of the cover in big leaps. The two bigger ones cut to the right, still trying to circle back, but the smallest tracks bolted off in a straight line across the top of the hill.

The smaller deer, less experienced, alone and quicker to tire, was a better bet. I followed it.

Totally Alive

The woods were beautiful. The bare hardwood limbs dark against the snow, the evergreens a rich dark green. I love the muffled silence after a big snow. The only sound was the shushing of my snowshoes and my breath. It felt like I had the woods to myself. The little Remington, light and short, felt good on my shoulder. I felt totally alive, gliding easily along on top of the snow, watching alertly ahead. I knew the inside of my thighs would burn tomorrow, but I didn't care.

The deer's first run was a long one, which is typical; they think they're going to lose you this way. I followed it for a solid half-mile before I jumped it again from a big hemlock stand on a hilltop. This time it didn't leave in such a panic.

The next time I jumped it after only 300 yards, and again it took off deliberately. It knew I was on its trail and had waited until I showed up before moving away. It seemed to be pacing itself. I could tell I was gaining on the animal.

I jumped it several more times after that, a couple of times after moving only 100 yards or so. It seemed to stop at every bit of cover, and I

was sure it was tiring. It didn't try to lose me by dodging and doubling back like most deer do. It just kept moving fairly straight away from me. I chalked this up to inexperience, and fully expected to get a shot at any minute.

But after a good two hours the deer was still going strong, and I still hadn't gotten a glimpse of it. The endurance of white-tailed deer always impresses me.

Finally it crossed an open pipeline in a gully. When I crossed it minutes later, I saw two hunters about a hundred yards apart, across from each other up on opposite sides of the gully. The deer had crossed 50 feet of open right-of-way in plain sight between both hunters — without being seen.

The tracks led down a ravine toward some flats, and about 300 yards in, on a hillside of mixed hardwood and hemlock, I stumbled onto a major crossing. Deer tracks were crisscrossing everywhere through an area about 300 yards across. The one I had been following jumped into one of the well-worn trails and went off toward the left. Maybe this was its destination all along;



THE DEER didn't try to lose me by dodging and doubling back like most deer do. It just kept moving fairly straight away from me.

it might have been smarter than I realized.

For half an hour I walked around, trying to untangle the tracks. A good number of deer had used the area for the past couple of days, and they had three well-packed main trails and several other lesser ones, with individual tracks scattered between. It looked like a typical deer yard, but in more open cover. All but a couple of the trails intersected within 50 yards of each other.

I returned to my deer's tracks. I could just make them out in the bottom of the trail, but if it got with other deer I'd never separate them out. It would be tough tracking. The little deer had won this hand, and I pondered what to do.

A lot of deer had traveled through here. I figured it would be an ideal place to just wait out the rest of the day. It was probably a better gamble than trying to follow the original deer. There was a knoll in the middle of the intersection, and when I climbed it I could see for a good hundred yards all around. All the trails were in sight. I leaned against a maple and settled down to watch.

I was warm from snowshoeing, but it was about 20 degrees and overcast, and within an hour I was stretching and jiggling to stop the shivering. I could barely see the flats below me, and like most hunters I was tormented with what might lie just out of sight. Maybe dozens of deer were congregated down there, I thought.

Finally I decided to check it out. The walk would warm me up, anyway. I thought of my brother Dave. He's a dedicated stand hunter, and he has one ironclad rule: Don't leave your stand.

I shuffled down into the flat several hundred yards. It got quite open, with only a few grass stems sticking out of the snow. No cover, and no tracks. The stand I had just left suddenly seemed very attractive, and I hustled back up the hill.

And there, only about 25 yards above

where I'd stood, was a fresh set of tracks. A deer had crossed while I was in the flats. Dave would have plenty to say when I told him about this. I promised myself I'd stay put until dark if I had to.

About two hours went by. The cold was bearable, as long as I moved and hopped around a bit. Then I heard puffing to my right.

I turned to see a deer lunging slowly, belly deep through the snow, only 20 yards away. It was coming right at me. I found it in the scope and made sure it was legal, but I don't even remember the gun going off. The deer ran another 30 yards as if unhit, then slowed and stopped, and lay down. It was dead by the time I got to it.

Now warm, I dragged the deer back to the stand and admired the dark gray-brown winter fur against the snow. It weighed about 80 pounds, and I was grateful for it. When I gutted it I saw the bullet had cut off the top of the heart, and I let myself feel a little smug, even though it had been a ridiculously easy shot.

I had a bonus tag so I stayed put. It was a satisfying afternoon, and with a deer at my feet I was content. The clouds cleared and the sun came out. Nothing moved but a lone gray squirrel, running back and forth on the snow between the same two trees. Finally the shadows lengthened and the sun dropped behind the hills.

I cut off the deer's lower legs, looped a rope over its neck, and started the long haul back to camp. I wasn't familiar with these woods and my trail in was already broken, so I decided to follow it back. The little deer slid easily along, but I didn't push too hard. I was enjoying myself too much.

Darkness fell, but the moon came out, and I could just make out my trail in the shadows among the hemlocks. I was in no hurry. I love deer hunting under any conditions, but following them on deep snow is my favorite.

***Darkness fell, but
the moon came out,
and I could just
make out my trail in
the shadows among
the hemlocks. I was
in no hurry.***

Pennsylvania's Other Rifle

Many know that the gunmakers of eastern Pennsylvania turned out famous long rifles, but it's not as well-known that some talented craftsmen moved west to produce the 'Pittsburgh rifle' and other arms.

By Mike Sajna

NOBODY KNOWS for sure the origins of the name Kentucky long rifle. One story maintains the gun was so named because it was carried by settlers heading west to Kentucky. But that may be more conjecture than history, since the earliest references to the long rifle call it a "rifle gun," and later accounts simply "rifle," names derived from the rifling cut into its barrel.

The first documented use of the term Kentucky long rifle appears shortly after the War of 1812 in a ballad about the Battle of New Orleans. "We gave them shot from our Kentucky rifles." Since most of the men who fought alongside Andrew Jackson at New Orleans were from Tennessee and Kentucky, it is likely the line applies more to the troops than the gun itself.

But the ballad was a hit. So it may have been the popularity of a song that caused the long rifle to be called Kentucky instead of Pennsylvania, even though most of them were made in the Keystone State.

In fact, not only were most long rifles made in Pennsylvania, the gun is thought to have evolved in Lancaster County out of a German design known as the "Yeager rifle," a gun that was heavier, shorter and



JACOB EARNEST was one of several gunsmiths who moved from eastern Pennsylvania to Westmoreland County. About 450 gunmakers worked in the western part of the state from the end of the American Revolution to the Civil War.

had a much larger bore than the long rifle. But it also could have come out of any of the other piedmont counties of eastern Pennsylvania, Maryland or Virginia, where German immigrants familiar with firearms had settled before the Revolution.

Because of their history and craftsmanship, long rifles from eastern Pennsylvania, especially Lancaster and York counties, have long been sought by collectors and bring top dollar on the antique gun market today. At least that is when one can be found. The poor quality of metal at the time and the heavy daily use caused most long rifles to wear out within five years.

Eastern Pennsylvania, though, was only one place where long rifles were made in the Keystone State. During the push west, gunsmiths from not only Lancaster and York, but also Virginia and Maryland, found their way across the Allegheny Mountains to Pittsburgh. There they set up shop and continued making long rifles well into the 1850s, long after gunmakers in eastern Pennsylvania had stopped.

"Fort Pitt at The Point and Fort Fayette, which was located at what is now the intersection of Penn Avenue and Ninth Street, were jumping off points for the expansion west down the Ohio River," says Richard Rosenberger, author of *The Longrifles of Western Pennsylvania: Allegheny and Westmoreland Counties*.

"Consequently, western Pennsylvania became a gun making center to supply settlers passing through and had a lot of gunmakers."

Rosenberger and his partner Charles Kaufmann have found western Pennsylvania rifles, particularly those from Westmoreland County, to be comparable to the finest guns made in eastern Pennsylvania during the Golden Age of the long rifle — which ran from about the close of the Revolution to the War of 1812.

"The reason that is the golden age is because after the war there was a surplus of gunmakers," Rosenberger explains. "Many people had become gunsmiths during the war because of the demand. After the war you didn't have the military demand, so the

gunsmiths began competing amongst themselves to make as fine a rifle as they could."

Chief among Pittsburgh gunsmiths was Henry Wolf. His guns were plain in appearance, without a lot of carvings and inlays, but the quality was excellent, making them eagerly sought.

"From the records we've found and the size of the facility he owned, he must have had numerous journeymen working for him," Rosenberger adds. "From the bills he was paid, you will see quite a bit of work done for the army."

Apparently, business was not good enough, however, as Rosenberger and Kaufmann also uncovered evidence revealing that Wolf's home and gun inventory were sold at sheriff's sale to pay his bills — back in those days of the debtor's prison.

Outside the city, western Pennsylvania's major gunmaker was the Ferree family. It was headed by Joel Ferree, who learned his trade in Lancaster County before the Revolution and migrated west to join other family members who were trading on the frontier.

In 1786, the Ferrees purchased property on Peters Creek in southern Allegheny County where they built a mill, made gunpowder and became the key family in the development of what is now called the "Pittsburgh rifle," a slightly scaled down version of the Lancaster long rifle.

Like Wolf, the Ferrees also trained a number of other gunsmiths, including Thomas Allison, whose apprentice John Fleeger worked in Pittsburgh from 1830 to 1882. He turned the Pittsburgh rifle into a work of art, covering it with elaborate carvings and engravings. However, he worked in a period when the long rifle was on its way out, so his guns were never in great demand.

Westmoreland County's gunsmiths were primarily Germans who moved there from eastern Pennsylvania during and after the Revolutionary War. Hempfield Twp., which held several Lutheran Churches, was a favorite location and home to a dozen extraordinary gunsmiths between 1800 and 1820.

Heading the list were Jacob Silvas, who lived in Washington Twp.; Jacob Earnest of Delmont; George Kettering and Samuel Zimmerman, both of Greensburg; and John Sherry and the Kempf brothers, Solomon and Benjamin, of Hempfield Twp.

Silvas, Earnest, Kettering and Zimmerman were all born within four years of each other and attended the Lutheran Church in Greensburg.

"And I don't think they were learning their catechism when they went to church," adds Rosenberger with a laugh. "I think they were learning gunsmithing."

Of all the Westmoreland County gunsmiths, Rosenberger rates Kettering as perhaps the best, followed by Earnest, whose sister Kettering married. That was a common occurrence in the gunmaking community, which was sort of a de facto craftsmen's guild.

"Jacob Earnest is a particularly attractive maker because his guns are encountered fairly frequently," says Rosenberger. "He worked a long time and he made good guns well into the 1850s, perhaps later. There is quite a bit known about the man

and I've never seen a gun of his that wasn't in great demand."

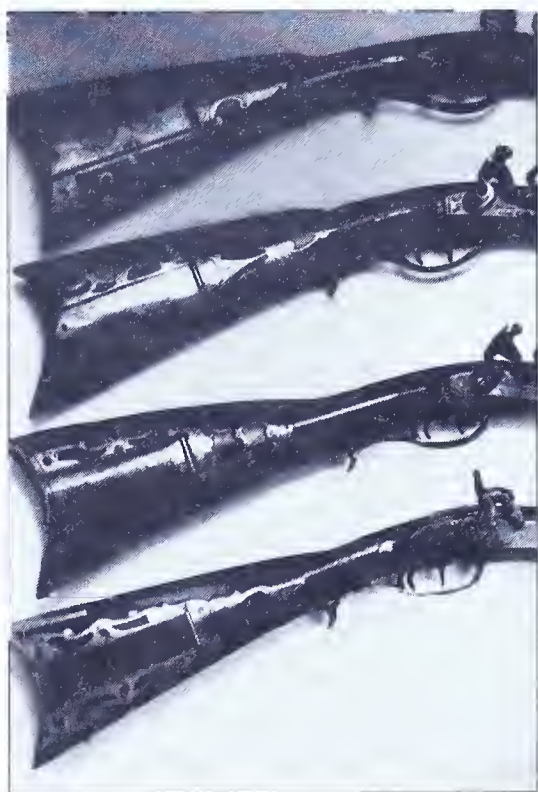
Earnest, whose house still stands on Pittsburgh Street in Delmont, had an especially interesting family history. According to "Indian Eve and Her Descendants" by Emma Replogle, published in Huntingdon in 1911, the Earnest family was living along Dunnings Creek near Fort Bedford in the autumn of 1777 when an Indian raiding party attacked their home.

"Several men had come to make rails," she writes. "While sitting around the chimney fire, they heard a noise like owls hooting. One of them said, 'We will not make many rails for it is going to rain soon, the owls are hooting.' It was the war whoop of the Indians they heard, and in a moment they were upon them. One or two of the men were killed at once. Mr. Earnest reached for his gun above the door, but was shot. The men were all scalped."

Four of the Earnests' six children escaped during the attack and hid in the woods. Eve Earnest, the mother, was taken captive with her son, Mike, and baby, Henry, and marched west to the Indian stronghold at Kittanning.

Eventually, Eve and her children were taken to Fort Detroit where they were ransomed by the British for a glass of whiskey with a silver coin in it. The Indians wanted to keep Henry, but the British took him and kept him in the fort. For weeks the Indians would appear and call for the boy they had named "Hanu."

According to Replogle, the Indians wanted Henry because he had adapted to life with them and wanted to stay. Rosenberger, however, has found evidence that the Henry who eventually returned to Bedford with Eve was born in 1780, two years after Eve's capture, leading him to believe baby Henry died in captivity and Eve had another child to an Indian father whom she also named Henry.



DURING THE Golden Age of the long rifle, gunmaking centers such as eastern and western Pennsylvania, Virginia and Maryland churned out hundreds of guns.

It was this child, possibly half Indian, who was the father of Jacob Earnest, the gunmaker, born on January 2, 1805.

Earnest served his apprenticeship with Matthias Aman in York County and first appears in Hempfield Twp. in 1826. He moved to Delmont in 1830, where he set up shop as a gunsmith and prospered, serving several terms as a borough councilman and eventually owning several properties in the town. He died on March 6, 1884.

Rosenberger says most Westmoreland County guns weren't signed and, since many of the county's gunsmiths were trained in Lancaster, he finds "them in collections of people who think they are eastern guns made 20 or 30 years earlier, and consequently worth two or three times as much."

One western Pennsylvania gunmaker who did mark his guns was James Bown, an Englishman who grew up in Canada and came to Pittsburgh in the 1840s to learn the cutlery trade. In 1848, he went into business selling surgical knives, instruments and guns as a sideline. In 1852, he began manufacturing his own guns and by the mid-1850s had shifted most of his business to rifles.

To both tout the accuracy of his long rifles and add some color, Bown stamped his guns with the image of a running deer and the name "Killbuck," after a famous Indian chief of the French and Indian War. Killbuck, who first fought and then later sided with the Americans during the Revolution, had lived on an island in the Allegheny River across from Fort Pitt.

Bown also sought to create a market for his guns through advertising, a move that may have contributed to the misnaming of the rifle when he had printed ads offering for sale "The Celebrated Kentucky Longrifle."

Although the gunmakers of Allegheny and Westmoreland counties are the main focus of *The Longrifles of Western Pennsylv-*

nia, Rosenberger and Kaufmann also found gunsmiths in Fayette, Greene, Washington and Beaver counties. All together, the pair uncovered about 450 gunmakers who worked in the region from the end of the Revolution to the Civil War.

Although the long rifle seems to be tied to the Revolutionary War period, very few rifles were actually used during the war. The Continental Army did employ some riflemen as snipers, but the war was fought almost entirely using European tactics and weapons, namely the smoothbore musket.

"The British hated the riflemen," Rosenberger adds. "They considered them vermin. No quarter was given to a rifleman."

Despite the fact rifle units were few in number, several battles were decided by riflemen, including the Battle of Saratoga, the war's turning point, since the American victory convinced the French to help the colonists.

Chances of victory were increased a few days before the battle when rifleman Timothy Murphy picked off British General Simon Fraser.

"One of the aides to Fraser had his reins cut by a ball and told the general he better get out of there because the American riflemen were shooting at him," Rosenberger says. "Fraser ignored him, said he was there to command his troops and the next shot hit him in the chest and killed him. His loss is generally considered an important factor in the American victory at Saratoga."

Since Murphy was in a unit commanded by General Richard Butler, a western Pennsylvanian and the man for whom Butler County is named, and loaders handed snipers various weapons while in battle, it is possible that he may have used a Pittsburgh long rifle to pick off the British general. And in the process changed the course of history with a Pennsylvania long rifle.

The Longrifles of Western Pennsylvania: Allegheny and Westmoreland Counties, by Richard Rosenberger and Charles Kaufmann is published by the University of Pittsburgh Press, c/o CUP Services, Box 6525, Ithaca, NY 14851. The book also is available in bookstores.

Second Seasons

By Carl W. McCardell

I LIKE TO HUNT the late seasons. Often, the fields and woodlots teeming with hunters during the fall season are empty come December. Some of my most memorable hunts have been in the extended seasons. Let me tell you about a few.

The brushpile stood out like a deer in a clover field. The sticks, branches and small limbs stuck out in all directions. Working my way between a broken fence and field of corn stubble, I almost passed it with just a glance.

I had been hunting only a few minutes. The after-holiday hunt had not been planned; I was a bored teenager with some time on my hands. I loved to hunt but, after all, there wasn't much to hunt in December and January, or so I thought.

After I stepped into that brushpile, though, I was sold on the second season. As a rabbit scooted out the far side I quickly stepped to my right, shouldered the 16-gauge double and rolled the cottontail with a load of 6s.

Spying some honeysuckle bordering the fence line along the woodlot, I proceeded to stomp into it. Sure enough, a second rabbit made a speedy exit from that thick cover. Suddenly, I had rabbit No. 2 in my game bag.

"Where were these critters last fall?" I said aloud to the surrounding trees. Not receiving an answer, I hunted toward another brushpile.

This time, when I got to within a few feet of the cover, a rabbit ran out so fast I didn't have time to shoot. Recovering from this turn of events I continued to check out other honeysuckle patches.

Before long I had a third rabbit, and I was one happy lad when I returned home and showed my parents. I had a complete change of heart about hunting after Christmas.

A few years later, I was out with Al Wells. When he had phoned the night before, I expressed some doubts about the weather.

"It's supposed to be in the low teens," I said. "It's one thing to go after deer when it's cold, but rabbits?"

Al thought he and I would be able to last at least an hour or so. I agreed to meet him at first light.

At the time, hunting had been allowed at Marsh Creek State Park for only a few years. It was usually crowded during the fall small game seasons, and also during deer season, but not so on this day.

"We're nuts," I told Al as the dampness in the air sent a chill

*Those who hang up
their guns before
Christmas may be
missing some of the
best small game
hunting to be had.*



through my rather warm clothing.

"Let's see what happens," Al responded as we trudged up the trail leading to some thick but low brier tangles.

We had no sooner left the trail when a rabbit darted out in front of Al. "I wasn't ready," he said with a laugh.

We took only a dozen or so steps when another rabbit decided to take a morning sprint. Al led that one perfectly with his 12-gauge double.

No sooner had we started again when a cottontail burst out directly in front of me. I missed it cleanly on the first shot, but rolled it on the second.

In short order another rabbit scurried from a thicket off to my left. I don't recall if I got that one, but I do know that within two hours we had six rabbits and missed several others. All told, we jumped nearly two dozen. Never before or since have I chased as many rabbits in such short time, not even with good beagles.

A year later Al and I were at it again, across from his home. We started the day along a long fencerow. And although the property was open to public hunting, we were the only souls afield.

A rabbit soon darted into the open field on my side. I swung straight through and pulled the trigger. "That's one," I yelled over to Al.

Within 30 yards the same thing happened again. "That's two," I yelled. Unbelievably, it happened for a third time. This time I didn't say a word.



"Did you get him?" Al asked

"Yeah," I said feeling more than a little smug. "I don't know why they're all coming out on my side," I tried to say with sympathy.

"That's one of those things," my buddy said.

When rabbit No. 4 paused at the edge of cover, with a look as though he was going to dart across the open field, too, I walked farther out into the field then dashed toward him. "He's coming, Al."

Boom. "You get him?" I asked.

"No, I missed."

"What? How could you?" I said.

"It's thick over here," he declared.

Al never knew I sent the rabbit over to him, forsaking my chances at a four-for-four limit — until now.

Well, when we went through the next field, Al got a clear shot at a rabbit, and he also shot a squirrel and found a hat someone else had lost, too.

Several years ago, on the next to the last day of the second season, I decided to go out for squirrels. It was bitter cold with a crusty snow. January was certainly keeping most hunters indoors; I had the game lands all to myself.

I found plenty of old squirrel sign, no doubt remaining from the warmer days the week before. When the sun shines during such frigid times, bushytails often come out in order to nap in the treetops. Otherwise, their trips from the dens are brief or nonexistent.

The crunchy snow was a distinct disadvantage, but I enjoyed tramping through some familiar haunts without running into other hunters. After a couple hours I decided to hunt my way back to the truck. The trail I chose had been heavily traveled by deer. As a result, the sun had melted some of the snow which provided for better and quieter walking.

I managed to close to within shotgun

IN SHORT ORDER another rabbit scurried from a thicket off to my left. Within two hours we'd killed six rabbits and missed several others.

ALTHOUGH THEY said there weren't any grouse left on this particular game lands, I had one in the bag after only an hour or so.

range. Three shots later two squirrels lay on the ground. A third squirrel, which I had not seen, escaped to the safety of the den.

Not long ago, the owner of a local sporting goods store and one of his employees were lamenting that there weren't any grouse left on a certain state game lands. "I've shot a number of them over there," I spoke up.

"Yeah," they both said. "But we've heard guys complaining that there are none left."

I knew better, so later in the week I set off for the game lands. Once again, I had a parking lot all to myself. There were four days left in the season, everyone seemed to have given up. This, in spite of relatively mild temperatures.

After nearly an hour I began to have some doubts, too, but suddenly a bird flushed about 40 yards ahead of me. I tracked its flight the best I could then realized it may have stopped just short of a pipeline opening in the cover.

Making a wide swing to my right, I carefully crossed the cleared area and reentered the thicket about where I figured the grouse had landed. Even though I fully expected the bird to be there, I was noticeably rattled when it took off.

Mounting the gun seemed automatic, as did the follow-through. I touched the trigger when the lead looked right. At the sound of my 12-gauge the grouse dropped to the ground. I couldn't help but think of the conversation that had taken place in the sporting goods store two days earlier. I decided to pay a visit.

"Who says there's no grouse left at the game lands?" I said while laying the grouse on the counter.

"Well, I'll be . . ." the employee's voice trailed off while the owner just shook his head and smiled.

After they had time to admire the bird, the owner asked, "Roadkill?"

"Hardly. I just wanted to show you what people are missing this time of year, on the



game lands," I said with a chuckle. "I really believe there are plenty of birds out there. It's just that most people think about grouse hunting only in October."

As the 1992-93 hunting year was coming to a close, Don Dewees called to see if I'd like to make one final trip up to his cabin. He told me the deep snow that had plagued us in antlerless season was nearly gone, so we'd have no trouble getting in the lane. Our plan was to leave on Thursday and hunt Friday and Saturday.

As it turned out, we weren't able to leave as early as we would have liked, so it wasn't until around 11 a.m. that we finally hit the grouse woods. Birds were around. We flushed a half-dozen out of hemlock trees but didn't see any.

The seventh grouse that flushed did so within 15 steps of me. It had been perched in a grape tangle growing around a cherry tree. I downed it with one shot.

"I didn't really expect to get anything this weekend," I shouted to Don.

"What was it eating," he asked as I checked the crop.

"Cherries," I said while showing him the evidence.

We hunted for 2½ hours, but all the birds we flushed were out of gun range. After a mid-afternoon bite to eat, we went back to hunting and stayed at it until almost quitting time. Seventeen flushes with one in the bag was more than we had anticipated.

That evening we visited Bob MacBride.

He owns a farm along Route 6, and although we had hunted deer at his place, we had never pursued grouse. When asked about grouse Bob said, "Well, we get them now and then, but I'm sure we'll find some rabbits tomorrow."

With those thoughts in mind Don and I returned early the next morning. To ensure that we'd be up to the task while hunting, Bob, his son, Robbie, Don and I shot almost half a box of claybirds. "No excuses now," Bob said with a grin. "I'll catch up to you boys later."

Robbie was our guide for the first couple of hours. Don hunted to my left in a ravine noted for grouse roosts while I walked just on the crest of the knoll. Robbie was to my immediate right.

A rabbit seemed to come out of nowhere and was barreling straight in front of me toward a thick brier patch. The 12-gauge roared. "You're a pretty good guide," I said to Robbie while hefting the rabbit.

On the way back through the same cover, I had a similar shot. I knew I had the proper lead when I pressed the trigger, but as it turned out, there was a groundhog hole right where I had shot. My companions were hardly sympathetic when I told them my tale of woe.

"All you got was one rabbit?" Bob scolded us. "I'll have to show ya where there's more after we eat lunch."

After a good meal, topped off with a couple of glasses of fresh milk straight from the cow, we were ready and raring to go.

We took the same basic course for the first several hundred yards. Robbie got a rabbit a little past the spot I had taken one earlier.

Angling a bit to the north this time, we crossed a relatively open field but proceeded to scour a thicket full of rabbit sign. I even saw a couple but didn't get any shooting. Bob's gun echoed off to my left. Don was closest to him but could not tell if he had scored.

Before long, Bob shot again. He'd taken a gray squirrel first then nearly stepped on a rabbit while retrieving the squirrel.

"I really enjoyed getting that fat squirrel,"

Bob grinned. "He's one of the ones that ate my corn this year."

Bob tried growing soybeans one season but lost most of his crop to groundhogs and deer. He and his fellow farmers have had it rough when it comes to crop damage. They all like to hunt whenever they can, in order to eliminate some of the "varmints."

We next entered a woodlot. Bob's shotgun boomed for the third and fourth times. He's a good shot, so I envisioned him with two more pieces of game.

Presently, I found Don and Robbie gingerly kicking the weeds aside, obviously looking for something. I joined them as Bob explained he had shot at two grouse. "I definitely missed the one but I know I got the other one," he said firmly.

Got It

After a 10-minute search we found the bird under some leaves. "Told ya I got it," Bob grinned from ear to ear.

After a long break, we made a sweep around a neighbor's woodlot, then hunted in the direction of the house. Robbie had already headed for home. Although he's an energetic teenager, we had tired him out.

I was walking down a small slope when a grouse exploded from the low branches of a hemlock. It was quickly disappearing behind a second hemlock when I fired.

The bird crumpled, then fell just out of view. I hurried over to make sure we wouldn't need another search party. The grouse was in plain sight when I reached the other side of the tree.

Bob and Don congratulated me when we got together. Bob still had some barn work so we called it a day.

As it turned out, Don was the only one who didn't get any shooting. "That's all right, I'll do a lot better next year when we come back," he said. Bob's look assured me he would be ready to have us come again come next January, maybe even sooner.

There are many more memories from such hunts I cannot begin to list here. I hate to think how much enjoyment I would have missed had I not taken advantage of the second season.

Southern Exposure

Gone are the days of mild autumn, and with the onset of winter and bitter cold, hunters need a new bag of tricks for grouse.

By Jim Bashline

AS A 16-year-old hunting for ruffed grouse, I didn't spend much time analyzing where and when most of the birds were found. A half-dozen mini-converts were only a short walk from my back door, so it was merely a case of heading for the one I hadn't hunted the last time.

Birds were reasonably plentiful then, a lot more plentiful than my rationed supply of shotshells. If I bagged five birds with a box of 20-gauge, I considered the \$2 investment a success. (Honest, there was a time when that was the retail price.)

Although my marksmanship hasn't improved significantly over the years, I think

I've learned a little about finding birds on cold and snowy days.

One of the biggest mistakes I made during the early years was assuming that grouse, on mornings following a substantial snowfall, would always be in the thickest hemlock or other protective cover. After wearing out a dozen pairs of brush pants, I've decided that this conventional "wisdom" is not flawless.

As a teenager, calling upon "woodswise" experience works only some of the time because one simply hasn't lived long enough to have acquired a great deal of it. That was the situation one morning in 1948 when I



THIS MAY LOOK like prime grouse cover, and most of the time it would be. But there are conditions that, especially in winter, cause grouse to forsake their normal haunts, the author says.

FOLLOW THE SUN: Grouse love the sun, and when it's cold they seek out southern exposures for resting and feeding.

had the entire day after Thanksgiving to chase these wonderful brown birds. Instead of walking to my favorite Niles Hill location via the top of the ridge on the west end of Coudersport, I elected to get there quicker by hiking on what was called the Niles Hill Road.

Two evenings earlier I had put a dozen or more grouse to bed in a nest of hemlocks there. A heavy snow had been brewing then, and as the light ebbed, birds bounced out everywhere.

This day, each step of the 40-minute hike brought my expectations to new heights. I was really going to be a wing-shooting terror, I kept telling myself. With eight inches of new snow on the ground, I'd see the birds easier, and those that were huddled in the hemlocks wouldn't know what hit 'em.

Fruitless Tramping

My game plan collapsed: Two hours of fruitless tramping convinced me that every bird in that 30-acre jungle had been stricken by some strange disease. What frustration. I had a whole day to hunt grouse exactly the way I wanted and couldn't kick out a single bird.

I decided to try another patch of hemlocks on the far end of the ridge. To get there, I had to walk a familiar open woods trail which paralleled the crest of the same ridge. It was a traditionally unproductive stretch of real estate but the shortest route to a different covert.

The trail was easy walking, even in the snow, and it passed through a sparse stand of maple, black cherry, beech brush and some scruffy sumac poles. I carried my 20-gauge casually in one hand, since I was expecting to see nothing more than the odd squirrel.

I figured a couple of grays in the pocket of the old GI field coat would salvage the

outing, so I shifted the shotgun to high-port position as the flick of a squirrel tail winked behind a 10-inch maple tree. It peeked one eye around the trunk for a quick survey and I nailed it.

At the crack of the gun, two grouse flushed from the precise spot the squirrel landed. Using a single-shot, I was in no position to do anything but mark them as well as I could. The birds flew no more than 80 yards and coasted into a small cluster of beech shrubs.

The route to where the birds pitched in took me through a stand of a dozen sumac trees. I couldn't believe my eyes when another pair of grouse materialized in the snow in front of me. The gun came up as they vaulted into the air amidst a blossom of snow. It would have been a perfect chance for a "double" (something I wouldn't achieve for several more years) — if I'd only had something other than the single-shot.

Fortunately, I held close enough to scratch the second bird with a half-dozen pellets and down it went. I had no trouble finding it; the full fan was sticking straight up in the fluffy snow.

The morning proved to be even sweeter because the first two grouse were exactly where I'd marked them. I centered the second one after missing the first. There was time to reload because bird No. 2 conveniently delayed its take-off — sometimes you get lucky.

Even more surprises were in store as I continued my walk through the open woods. My grouse limit was filled, so I turned to squirrel hunting. I kicked out four more birds as I ambled about looking for grays, and it wasn't hard to decide to return there the next morning.

I did, and I got another pair. At that point I vowed to own a double-barreled shotgun someday soon. Back then grouse



season ended on the last Saturday of November. There was no post-Christmas season, so I had no other chance that year to see how long the birds would remain in the sparse cover. Subsequent years, however, proved the wisdom of checking out open cover after a snow.

The reason the birds were there was obvious, though at first I didn't realize it. My next-door neighbor, Art Logue, opened my eyes. Logue was a hero of mine, so I had to show him my second brace of birds. Since he was also the district game protector, he examined the crop contents.

The huge, distended food sacs of my grouse were packed with sumac seeds (as were the sacs of the birds from the previous day's hunt). The claret seed clumps of the wispy sumacs were far more attractive to hungry grouse than anything in the hemlock swale. But there's more to finding birds on off days than a ready food supply.

Weather, time of day, as well as several other factors (some of which we'll never know), can all affect where grouse will be. Other game birds can be affected similarly, but grouse are particularly attentive to vagaries of wind, precipitation and barometer.

The birds I had put to bed before the

snowstorm were in the hemlocks for wind and snow protection. Even though the birds might have known that the sumac pods were easy pickings, they also knew that perching on bare limbs during the night was bad for their health.

Oh, grouse don't mind cold nights all that much, but what targets they make for the great-horned owls at night and the goshawks at daybreak. Dumb grouse don't live very long; the smart ones roost in thicker cover where flying predators can't operate effectively.

There's another, more obvious indicator of where to find grouse on cold days; it's the sun. Though ruffed grouse are not tropical inhabitants, they sure are sun lovers. During cold snaps they often seek out southern exposures for resting and feeding.

If suitable food happens to be in the sun, so much the better. If it isn't, the birds might feed in a shady nook but quickly seek out the warmth of the sun for resting and digesting.

The great love grouse have for the sun may have something to do with their choice of nesting sites. Most of the grouse nests I've found were in sunny locations, or at least where mottled sunlight struck the nest. This love of the sun may even imprint on the chicks.

We'll never be able to get into the brains of ruffed grouse and find out precisely why they do some of the things they do, but my observations have convinced me that grouse adjust their feeding and rising times to the amount of available sunlight.

With the Sun

I've hunted grouse "with the sun" for more than 40 years, and I would no more think of hunting the shady side of the hill or a gloomy swale in the morning than I would of using a favorite double gun as a crow bar. Conversely, the last afternoon march before calling it quits will be made in thicker (roosting) cover or at least close to such a spot.

Grouse are not terribly fond of rain. Grouse hunters aren't either, but hunting these birds on drizzly days may be the most

productive hours you'll ever spend. No one wants to go out during a blinding downpour, but a gentle rain, if it isn't too cold, can be ideal.

The birds will be, as the old-timers love to say, "sitting tight." Grouse don't like to fly in the rain. They'll hunch up beneath a windfall, a low hemlock bough or in a tangle of laurel and practically allow themselves to be stepped on before flying. This makes for exciting flushes and close shots.

A soggy bird will often permit a dog to come within a nose-length before it flushes. Game bird feathers seem to hold extrascient when wet — just like a dog will when it's soaked.

I love to get a young grouse dog out on a day when a soft, warm rain is falling and a light breeze is shifting the scent around. If the pup has any bird sense at all, you'll see its eyes light up when it sniffs a wet grouse. Believe it or not, most humans can also smell a bird on such days.

Water dripping down the back of your neck may not be your idea of a good time, but on wet days I'll opt for the thickest, nastiest cover I can find. I'll never forget such a day spent with Nick Sisley and the late Ned Smith, in one of Sisley's "secret" coverts near the Ohio line. It was a terribly wet and clammy hunt, all topped off with a west wind that threatened to turn into a gale.

Nick's wonderful grouse bitch, Magic, was in top form and pointed so many birds "right in the eye" that I was beginning to think every grouse in the world was in that 100-acre plot. It was a dense tangle of dogwood, grapevine, briars and stunted oaks that forced us to our hands and knees half the time.

We each bagged a pair of birds and missed several more in the process. This cover was always most productive on wet days, Nick had discovered. On bright days the birds were on the other end of the patch

where larger oaks and thornapples provided a different menu.

Ah, thornapples. Find thornapples, either red or yellow varieties, and the grouse — if there are any in the area at all — won't be far away. The birds can't resist them. While they seldom roost in the runty trees, they are usually only as far away as the first good roosting spot. But they won't move into those areas until a more refined hour to avoid being spotted by a hunting owl.

Hit the thornapples between 10 a.m. and noon, and then again during the last afternoon light. Ordinarily grouse feed for an hour or so during the morning and again for the same amount of time in the afternoon. If you have several covers to hunt, try to time your assaults when

the warm sun is at your back.

Admittedly, it's a gross generalization that grouse feed twice a day; some don't. The pattern is true enough during most of the early season, but I'm convinced that during the colder months grouse feed longer at one sitting. But they may only do it once a day.

For survival reasons, I suppose, grouse can get along nicely on less food during the winter. They seem to feed heavily during the late summer and fall, and just prior to breeding season in the spring. But in winter a few thimbles of tree buds will keep them going for a long time. Even a few days without food can be tolerated.

Grouse are first-class survivors. Try all the tricks you can devise and our state bird will come up with new tactics to outwit you. They've never been successfully pen-raised, and for that reason remain the wildest and most challenging game bird wherever they exist.

For more than a few hunters, me included, the ruffed grouse is America's finest game bird. As you find more birds by following the sun, the odds are good that you'll come share this opinion, too.

Grouse are first-class survivors. Try all the tricks you can devise and our state bird will come up with new tactics to outwit you.

The Bald Trophy

Taking antlerless deer is no less memorable than harvesting those with racks, and making a keepsake is simple. Here's how. — BY FRAN GOUGH

THEY MATERIALIZED at eight o'clock. First, it was just a head over the ridge top, some 40 yards away. Then, slowly, cautiously, seven more appeared. Feeding casually over the ridge, the deer were coming right toward me. The wind was in my favor. Peering intently from my stand, I waited. When they got within 20 yards I steadied my shotgun and squeezed the trigger . . .

It was 8:15 and my first deer lay at my feet. I had imagined my first deer would be a big buck. But this deer, although a doe, was every bit a trophy to me. After taking a few photos, I savored the moment, absorbing memories along with the morning sun. I wanted to make sure I remembered as much about this first deer as I possibly could.

I didn't have the tangible reminder of a rack, but then I came up with an idea, an inexpensive idea that anybody can do in very little time. Simply, I preserved the tail.

The basic steps for this procedure are:

1. Remove the tail from the deer.
2. Carefully skin out the tail along its underside, removing the tail bone.
3. Pin the tail, flesh side up, on a board and let it dry for five to seven days. To aid drying, spread salt on the flesh.
4. After the tail has dried, remove it from the board. Nicks and weak spots can be repaired or strengthened by running a bead of silicon or liquid rubber along the flesh side of the tail.

Next I put two small holes in the corners of the tail and run a leather thong through them so I can hang it. As a finishing touch, I may put my deer tag on the leather thong, as a reminder of the time and place of that special moment.





FIELD NOTES



Barn Owl Decline

Barn owls, sometimes called monkey-faced owls, seem to be declining. This may be due to a lack of nesting sites, and we're currently searching for barn owl locations. The birds nest in old buildings, barns, church steeples, warehouses and the like, in addition to natural cavities. We're also investigating possible sites on game lands and on public access cooperators' properties, where we plan to install nest boxes. Ultimately, we hope public interest will aid in the barn owl's recovery just like it did the bluebird's. — LMO James Deniker, Sandy Lake.



Plan Backfires

MONROE COUNTY — After receiving several complaints about early morning shooting, some of my deputies and I devised a plan to catch the violator. We were in place by 3 a.m., and an hour later a loud bang pierced the morning air and within seconds a vehicle appeared — followed by another bang. We descended on the suspect's vehicle, but any notion of making an arrest quickly went up in smoke when we realized the bangs were the result of a poorly tuned engine. — WCO Thomas M. Smith, Bartonsville.

'Tis the Season

BRADFORD COUNTY — Christmas is coming, and hunters should consider sending cards to the landowners on whose property they hunted. Such a show of appreciation is a nice gesture, and it may also get you an invitation to come back. — WCO Richard P. Larned, Warren Center.

Jumping to Conclusions

FRANKLIN COUNTY — One Sunday night, Jacob Heisey and his son, Ray, heard a shot near their place. Ray drove out in his truck to investigate, and as he was cruising along a cornfield two guys leaped out. They threw a deer in the back of his truck, jumped in, and hollered, "Let's go!" Ray was too startled to do anything, and when the men suddenly realized they'd hopped in the wrong truck, they took off. The deer went to a needy family, and my deputies and I are on the lookout for a truck like Ray's. — WCO Frank Clark, Fayetteville.

A Reminder

TRAINING SCHOOL — Now is the time to clean out your bluebird nesting boxes and make necessary repairs. Before you know it, the birds will be returning and looking for a place to nest. — Trainee David A. Carlini, Harrisburg.

Their Problems, Our Problems

I recently hosted two wildlife biologists from Honduras. After listening to their environmental, financial and political problems, I felt fortunate we enjoy such a good wildlife management system. However, it's important to remember their problems can also be our problems. Many of our bird species winter in Central America. — LMO Shayne Hoachlander, Corry.

Snow White

In October 1992 I saw an all-white crow in a field near my home, the first such crow I'd ever seen. Although it was an uncommon sighting, this past October — on about the same week — I saw not one but two white crows in the same field. — LMO Edward J. Zindell, Wilkes-Barre.

Keep Watch

TRAINING SCHOOL — I saw a recent news program that indicated poaching was second only to the drug trade as the nation's biggest illegal money making operation. Amazingly, most of the poaching incidents they showed occurred in broad daylight. Keep that in mind when you're hunting, scouting or hiking, and report any illegal activity you see through our region toll-free numbers. — Trainee Guy Hansen, Harrisburg.

Could've Been Worse

TRAINING SCHOOL — We sometimes give our visiting instructors nicknames appropriate to the topic they're teaching. When my father, LMO Dick Belding, came to teach us about warm season grasses, he explained how burning is an important management tool to generate regrowth. By the time he was finished, I heard the nickname "Firebug" a couple times. So next spring, if you see fields of grass burning, look around and maybe you'll see Firebug in action. — Trainee Matthew D. Belding, Harrisburg.

Now What?

For 34 years I woke nearly every morning knowing what I was going to have to do that day. In less than four months I'll retire, and then I'll have to figure out things to do. For the past year I've been going crazy trying to leave nothing undone before the end of my career. It's been hard to convince myself that I'm not indispensable, and that there will be a competent person to take my place. — LMO Robert H. Muir, Kittanning.



Some Tour

Federal Aid Supervisor Matt Hough and I got to work with three wildlife technicians from Maryland who were here to observe the land management practices we apply. We got to show them a lot of things, perhaps the highlight of which was the roadkilled coyote inside the town limits of Midland. — LMO Richard B. Belding, Waynesburg.

Our Friends

CRAWFORD COUNTY — I recently attended a "Friends of the NRA" banquet in Meadville. The large crowd was made up of many of the same responsible people we see at Ducks Unlimited and Pennsylvania Federation of Sportsmen's Clubs dinners. NRA members are not a bunch of radicals, as some would have you believe. — WCO Dave Myers, Linesville.

Good News

ADAMSCOUNTY — I was signing up farms in the Deer Damage Area program when one landowner gave me some good news. He said he was initially apprehensive about joining, but quite a few deer had been taken on his property and hunter behavior was exemplary. Many folks asked permission to hunt, and some asked if he wanted any venison. Returning home one day, he found six sticks of venison bologna on his front porch. — WCO Steven M. Spangler, East Berlin.

Checkered Pasts?

TRAINING SCHOOL — During a hunter-ed class, we presented a scenario designed to show students what information they should record if they witness a game law violation. Trainees Wenzel and Zellner played the part of the violators so convincingly that the training school staff began to wonder about their pasts. Maybe we should keep a closer eye on them. — Trainee Darin L. Clark, Harrisburg.



Tough Course for Some

TRAINING SCHOOL — Over the past several months, one of my fellow students has developed an aversion to our study of trees. During our dendrology course he ran face-first into a purple martin house, was attacked by a cicada, and became so flustered that he identified a cricket as a large tick. He was glad to see midterms come and go, and he did well except that during the exam he stepped in a yellow jackets' nest. — Trainee David L. Stewart, Jr., Harrisburg.

At Least They Weren't Ticking

LYCOMING COUNTY — One day last fall I got a call about an animal trapped in a window well. I arrived to find not one but five skunks caught deep in the bowels of an old cellar window well. After nearly half an hour of painstakingly careful work, I had all five out and loaded into my vehicle. In the process I learned to respect guys who dismantle bombs for a living. — WCO Terry D. Wills, Williamsport.

End of the Line

MERCER COUNTY — An injured immature bald eagle was found on David Alloway's farm just west of Grove City. Thanks to the family's help, we were able to recover the eagle and get it under the care of two area vets. Unfortunately, it died of pneumonia within 10 days. The interesting part of the story is that the eagle was banded last summer near Knoxville, TN, as part of that state's reintroduction plan. — WCO Donald G. Chaybin, Greenville.

Not Needy

PERRY COUNTY — In my 25 years of law enforcement, I've never run across a poacher who was truly needy. In fact, most who claimed to be needy had enough money to buy the alcohol and tobacco I found in their vehicles. Deputy Gene Palm recently caught two people shooting late at night. In their attempt to kill a deer, they wounded 17 with buckshot. Those are the people who are poaching, not someone who is hungry. — WCO Jim Brown, Loysville.

Unite!

WYOMING COUNTY — The archer, the rifleman, the houndsman and the trapper must learn to respect one another. We can't afford to bicker among ourselves while the anti-hunters grow stronger, working toward their goal of abolishing all hunting and trapping. The only way we can defeat them is to work together: Let's use our energy to fight our enemies, not each other. — WCO William Wasserman, Tunkhannock.

Vital Acreage

While changing the battery in a beaver deterrent fence on SGL 56, the wildlife I saw reminded me of the importance of our game lands and wetlands. In less than an hour I saw an osprey, two families of wood ducks, a flock of geese, a brood of mallards, a great blue heron and two green herons, and a belted kingfisher. Our 1.3 million acres are vital to wildlife management, both for game and nongame. — LMO Bruce C. Metz, Spinnerstown.



Turnabout

TRAINING SCHOOL — We constantly speak of the dangers free-running dogs pose to wildlife, but last dove season WCO Robert Prall and I saw how the tables can be turned. While we checked a hunter, his dog wandered into the brush and found a bedded fawn. When the fawn bleated in alarm, the doe came charging at the dog, stomped on its nose, and chased the hound right past us. — Trainee Thomas P. Grohol, Harrisburg.

Deer on the Skids

PHILADELPHIA COUNTY — A man told me that on his way to work at four in the morning he saw two deer at a SEPTA bus shelter. They were eating out of a trash can. With all the loss of habitat in this area, it's not surprising that deer are scrounging for food wherever they can. — WCO Richard J. Shire, Philadelphia.

Say Cheese

TIOGACOUNTY — Back in September I was sitting on my porch when a hummingbird landed on a potted plant about five feet away. As I watched the bird, a black bear shuffled onto the lawn, and after a bit it stood up and looked to its left. I followed its gaze to find two doe and their fawns staring at the bear. If I would've had a camera with a wide-angle lens, I could've gotten them all in one picture. — WCO John Snyder, Wellsboro.

We Deliver

While we were having dinner at a pizza place, my son Matt pointed out that each time a car pulled up birds would converge on the front of it. Closer examination revealed they were eating bugs that had collected on the front bumpers and grills. In the case of this flock of sparrows, that pizza place really does deliver. — LMO D.R. Koppenhaver, Everett.

Grounded

POTTER COUNTY — I watched a large flock of turkeys feeding in a grass field in Bingham Township, not an unusual sight here except the flock was made up of 27 birds and one deer. Everywhere the turkeys went, the deer followed. I couldn't help but wonder what the deer would do if the turkeys took to the wing. — WCO Butch Camp, Ulysses.



Lesson Not Soon Forgotten

WESTMORELAND COUNTY — I must commend several members of the McKeesport Gun Club for their efforts in rescuing a groundhog that had fallen into an outhouse pit. The animal apparently was in search of salt when it fell through the hole, and one of the members heard a commotion when he entered the outhouse. He and several other shooters fashioned a capture pole and removed the chuck. At last report, the animal was seen bathing in a nearby stream. — WCO Joseph V. Stefko, Greensburg.

The Great Indoors

TRAINING SCHOOL — My dad and I were eating breakfast in our Tioga County cabin when a mouse scurried across the kitchen floor. It was carrying something in its mouth, which it dropped as it squeezed under a closet door. Upon investigation, we found it was a baby mouse, lying helpless on the floor. A split second later, right before our eyes, the pup was pulled under the door. We watched in amazement as the mother moved her entire litter into a new nest. It seems you don't have to get out in the wild to see wildlife. — Trainee Christopher B. Grudi, Harrisburg.

Bumper Crop

Our mast crop was exceptional this year. Apple trees were so loaded with fruit that many trees suffered broken limbs. Oaks that weren't hit by gypsy moths dropped a lot of acorns, and the dogwoods had a bumper berry crop. I also saw autumn olive and honeysuckles so full of berries that their branches drooped. For hunters who haven't discovered it already, game will certainly be spread out this fall and winter. For farmers the news is welcome because an abundance of natural food means a decrease in crop damage. — LMO Ned Weston, West Sunbury.

Them's Fightin' Words

Food & Cover corpsman William May was driving on Route 183 when he saw a wild turkey gobbler that had been boldly approaching people and cars. For the bird's own good, Bill decided to call in the bird with his turkey calls, capture it, and take the bird to game lands. The bird came within 10 feet and stopped. It was still too far away to grab for it, so Bill decided to imitate a gobble. It worked: The bird launched at him, wings beating and spurs extended. Bill dodged the turkey's attack, looked around to make sure no one had witnessed the incident, and left. — LMO Stephen L. Opet, Tamaqua.

Ugly Duckling?

CAMBRIA COUNTY — Last spring I got a call to pick up a baby grouse, but when I got there it looked more like a baby pheasant. I gave it to LMO Barry Zaffuto so he could take it to a farmer who had young pheasants on his property. The farmer tried to release the orphan with the wild birds, but it didn't work. A couple months later, Barry told me the bird was doing well, but the pheasants still didn't want anything to do with the white turkey. — WCO Shawn Harshaw, Nanty Glo.



Book of Field Notes

What's sure to be welcome news for many *Game News* readers, a hardcover, approximately 275-page collection of Field Notes will soon be available. The Conservation Officers of Pennsylvania — an organization of Game Commission and Fish Commission officers — is publishing *Best of the Field*, a selection of the most interesting and humorous Field Notes that have appeared in *Game News* since 1932. Of course, Nick Rosato cartoons, many of which done specifically for this book, will also be featured. Copies ordered by Jan. 31, 1994, will cost only \$9.95, plus \$1.95 s&h. Beginning Feb. 1, the cost will increase to \$11.95, plus s&h, so order today. Shipping is anticipated to begin around mid-February. To order *Best of the Field* send check or money order to: Conservation Officers of PA, P.O. Box 3304, Williamsport, PA 17701.

Eagles, Peregrines Continue along Comeback Trail

EFFORTS TO RETURN two federally endangered species to the state continue to pay dividends. A record 16 pairs of bald eagles attempted to nest here this year, three more than in '92. And the peregrine falcon, which disappeared from the skies of the eastern United States for nearly 20 years, is benefiting from a nationwide reintroduction effort.

Like many birds of prey, the bald eagle suffered a major decline during the heyday of pesticides such as DDT. The Commission began its eagle recovery program in 1982, and at the end of seven years the program had returned nesting pairs to the Delaware and Susquehanna watersheds.

The continued increase of nesting pairs in the state reflects the eaglet hacking efforts that were the focus of the recovery program.

"The last eagles we hacked will reach sexual maturity next year," Commission Biologist Dan Brauning said. "From then on, we expect the natural reproduction by the hacked birds and their progeny to fuel our eagle recovery efforts and lead to even greater nesting activity across the state."

Although three new nests were discovered this year, production of young — a total of 15 eaglets — dropped for the first time in four years. The decrease was primarily caused by the March 12-13 blizzard; many nests were abandoned during the heavy snows and high winds.

Since the mid-1980s, peregrines have been nesting on bridges and buildings in southeastern Pennsylvania, and more recently in Pittsburgh. Like the bald eagle, the peregrine fell victim to, among other things, pesticide use. At one time, there



KATHY CLARK, left, and Carol Yeisley process a young peregrine. Ten peregrine chicks were released through hacking at three sites in Pennsylvania and one in New Jersey.

were up to 34 active nest sites across the state; this year we had six nesting pairs.

New this year was a cooperative effort between the Commission and New Jersey's wildlife department. The joint peregrine reintroduction program was initiated to increase productivity of nesting peregrines in the Philadelphia/New Jersey area, and to educate the public about the plight of the peregrine and other endangered species.

With major funding provided by the William Penn Foundation, biologists gathered eggs for artificial incubation from three Delaware Valley bridges where nesting success had been poor. Young produced from these eggs were distributed to hack sites in Harrisburg, Reading and Trenton, NJ.

The hack sites were atop buildings, offering an excellent opportunity to educate the public. Lobbies were equipped with video monitors permitting views of the birds, and displays highlighted details of the project.

In a program apart from the Penn/Jersey

Conservation News

alliance, two young peregrines were fledged in Williamsport.

One of the three pairs nesting in the Delaware Valley (from which eggs for the reintroduction project were taken) renested; two young hatched and one fledged. The Pittsburgh pair successfully fledged young for the third year in a row; two young were produced this year.

In all, 10 birds were placed at hack sites, seven of which fledged.

The young birds remained in the release areas until August or September and then dispersed. Birds are permanently marked so their movements and survival rates can be studied.

During the summer, one of the Pitts-

burgh young was found dead about 15 miles northwest of the city.

A bird that was banded in Pittsburgh in 1992 spent this past summer in Burlington, VT, and is "apparently doing quite well," Brauning said. A bird that was released in Shenandoah National Park in Virginia was found dead in Harrisburg a few months ago.

These sightings fit the pattern that young birds in the eastern United States move north, at least for the first few years of their lives.

"We're looking forward to continuing the peregrine program," Brauning said. "We hope our reintroduction efforts will expand the population into natural nesting sites."

Late resident goose season

The state's second experimental late season for resident Canada geese will run Jan. 20 through Feb. 5. The special permits required to participate in the hunt are available by mail and over the counter at Game Commission offices.

The hunt will be held on and within five miles of portions of the Susquehanna and Juniata rivers. The southern boundary was extended this year to five miles below the Turnpike bridge on the Susquehanna south of Harrisburg. The upper boundary on the North Branch is five miles above the I-80 bridge near Bloomsburg; on the West Branch the upper boundary is five miles above the Route 150 bridge near Lock Haven.

The hunt zone extends up the Juniata River as far as five miles above the Route 103 bridge in Lewistown.

Pennsylvania's resident Canada goose population, estimated at 100,000 and growing, is increasingly causing nuisance problems on lawns, golf courses, parks and the like.

The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, while restricting the harvest of migrant geese because of their seriously declining populations, has set criteria

under which states can take resident birds. No more than 20 percent of the late season harvest can be composed of migrants, and the season dates and locations are set to minimize the possibility of killing migrants.

Hunters are required to obtain a free permit from the Commission (in addition to other waterfowl hunting license requirements), and they must keep a daily record of days hunted and geese harvested — whether they kill a bird or not.

Hunters must return the self-addressed, postage-paid report card that comes with the permit — whether they hunt or not — to the Commission by Feb. 15.

The permit issued for the September goose hunt is not valid for the late season.

To obtain the late season permit, write Pennsylvania Game Commission, Late Goose Season Permit, 2001 Elmerton Ave., Harrisburg, PA 17110-9797. Requests must be accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

The permits are also available at Game Commission region offices and the Harrisburg headquarters.

Deadline nears for SPORT essay contest

The Commission's SPORT Essay Contest is open to young hunters across the state. This year's theme is "Respect for my sport — What it means to me and how it affects others." Entries must be postmarked no later than Jan. 31, 1994.

The contest awards winners in senior (ages 16 to 18) and junior (12 to 15) categories. It is open to Pennsylvania residents who have completed a hunter-ed course and possess a current hunting or furtaker license.

All entrants must be currently enrolled as students and have not yet completed 12th grade. Prior first-place winners in either category are not eligible to enter an essay in the same category.

Essays may be printed, typed or computer-generated. They must be double-spaced and contain no more than 300 words. All essays become property of the Game Commission, and first-place winners' essays will be published in *Game News*.

Judges will be chosen by the Commission and their decisions are final.

Entries must include full name, mailing address including zip code, age and date of birth, and telephone number including area code.

In addition, entrants must note the year, state and county in which they took a hunter education class or Pennsylvania's Hunter-Trapper Education course.

Please include 1993-94 hunting or furtaking license number, along with name of school and grade.

The senior winner will receive a Savage Arms .270 rifle, and the junior winner will get a Savage .22 Hornet/20-gauge.

First runners-up in each category will receive single-barrel shotguns from New England Firearms; second runners-up will get binoculars from Tasco. Prizes were made possible by the generosity of the manufacturers.

All contestants will earn SPORT and "We Need Wildlife" patches.

Mail entries to Pennsylvania Game Commission, SPORT Essay Contest, 2001 Elmerton Ave., Harrisburg, PA 17110-9797.

Landowners must report deer kills

Landowners who harvest deer on property for which they are not required to be licensed must nonetheless report their kills. If you harvest a deer on your own property, send a postcard to the Commission's Harrisburg headquarters with the following information: your name and address; month, day and year of kill; county and township in which killed; antlered or antlerless deer (deer having no antlers or both antlers less than three inches long are antlerless); number of points if antlered; and hunting arm used. The information must be mailed to the Commission within 10 days of kill.

Be on the lookout for dead pheasants

The Commission's pheasant restoration project, which involved stocking thousands of birds in six study areas closed to pheasant hunting, is well underway. Releases ended Oct. 5.

The agency wants people who find dead pheasants with leg bands to call their local region office. These birds are part of the restoration program. It's

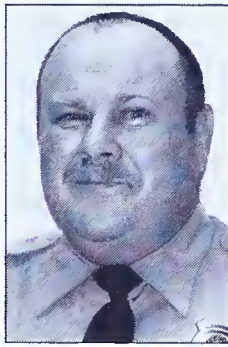
expected that as the pheasants establish home ranges, some will be killed by cars, domestic pets and wild predators.

Please give the band number (you can keep the band), sex of bird, date and place found, and how the bird was killed (if known). This information is vital to the study.

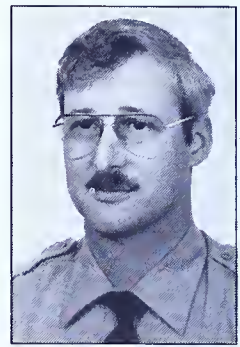
Outstanding Deputy Wildlife Conservation Officers — 1992



James A. Lowros
Northwest
Titusville



Robert F. Miller
Northcentral
Ulysses



Frederick M. Merluzzi
Northeast
Lehighton

The Game Commission could never accomplish its mission as effectively as it does without the indispensable aid of the deputy force — nearly 1,000 strong. The deputies shown here have made outstanding contributions to the agency's goals, and all Pennsylvanians should join in honoring them for their exemplary contributions to wildlife conservation.



Donald L. Rupp
Southwest
Vandergrift



Thomas R. Shippey
Southcentral
Manns Choice



Edwin E. Leid
Southeast
New London

PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES who require special assistance at Game Commission public functions should contact the telephone number listed with the announcement, the appropriate region office or the Harrisburg headquarters. Toll-free numbers for each region are listed in every issue of *Game News*; the Harrisburg number is (717) 787-4250.

Game Commission Sale Items

Books & Videos

Game Commission publications cover subjects from firearms and building nesting devices to animal lore and wild game cookery.

Quantity		Price
_____	<i>Shooter's Corner</i> , by Don Lewis	\$15.00
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Let it Snow

WHAT IS IT that sparks the greatest excitement in a hunter? A huge-racked buck barreling by? The shotgun bead on a long-beard gobbler? A bruin slinking from a swamp? None of these! What hunters anticipate most every season is snow.

October archers yearn for a premature storm; January muzzleloaders feel cheated without it. Sifted gently or blown violently, paper-thin ground-cover or waist-deep blanket, snow is one aspect that radically changes the face of any hunt, often for the better, and always interestingly.

Snow breaks the monotony of all-too-similar days in a woods. November's wand has waved to neutral browns and grays. Windy or still, overcast or sunny were the only variations; then came the snow. Suddenly the familiar forest is transformed, a white icing smoothed on plain cake and ready for a party. All rough edges disappear, landmarks sink below waves of six-sided crystals. What remains showing of the old terrain, the snow makes a picture of contrasts, white with any other color, pine-tree green or gray-black boulder.

After a fresh snowfall, the earth is an alien ice planet on which no human being has yet set foot, a visit to a brand new world without crossing space or time. Snow makes a much-trodden woods a virgin wilderness again.

Even the well-known assume fantastical shapes. Bare bushes "releaf" solidly in white. Logs, stumps, rocks swell to several times their size under a covering feet thick. Crisp-dry leaves and brittle branches that made footsteps crackle vanish magically. The



Bob Steiner

new sound of walking is a whisper in the fluff or a crunch in bitter cold. Only memory reminds that there's another forest floor beneath the smooth and undulating landscape of white.

All that is just the view, the window

Another View...

by Linda Steiner

dressing, the snow's strange newness sparking an excitement and eagerness to be in it that has nothing to do with the hunt itself. But what of snow and hunting? It's here that any half-romantic wish to see the woods winter-white is joined by practicality.

The first season in which hunters can reasonably expect snow is not until small game. Fall archery season may see flurries that have bowhunters turning up their collars and wishing they'd bought insulated camouflage. But it's as November runs its course that hunters peek out the window before breakfast, hoping it has snowed overnight.

Snow helps hunters in two ways: Its weight breaks down standing weeds and brambles, and strips brittle limbs and the last leaves from trees. After the snow melts, rabbit and grouse hunters find it easier to get through cover and coverts, and to see the game that's flushed.

Snow is also a tattletale, verifying what the hunter has only suspected from subtle signs: the presence or absence of game. Nothing moves on the snow without leaving an imprint, rare where it seldom goes, plentiful around its home. Encountering fresh sign, a hunter's heart, in spite of his years of sport, beats faster and he grips the gun stock tightly.

Perhaps more than others afield in November, turkey hunters long for snow. Any year in which a turkey tracking snow appears is counted as a wonderful exception, against which succeeding years must measure up. Turkey hunters conform to a human tradition in cold climates, reminiscing about the "good old days" when snows were deeper and they walked farther than today's would-be nimrods. But the truth of the matter is, in Pennsylvania, with an edge on Dixieland, November and snow are not synonymous.

But when it comes, turkey hunters take

that last vacation day or call up the boss with a hacking cough. It's worth the risk to be out in the untrodden whiteness to find the birds' first footfalls after fly down. Not only is any track a fresh one and the birds near, but snow makes silhouettes of their dark bodies. By the time a storm comes,

usually the last week of the season, turkey hunters are ready for any kind of help.

Bear hunters rely somewhat heavily on snow for success. Their numbers are fewer, meaning less chance of a fellow hunter booting a bear by them. The secretive nature of the bear, and the thick woods and close swamps it frequents, make tagging one

without snow more difficult than it already is. Enter a new snowfall, and hunters not only can see the bruins better, but have fresh tracks to follow or intercept. With snow, a hunter can often actually see when he's got a real chance of bear steaks.

What's a buck season without snow? Watching monotone woods for an animal that matches. But let it snow the weekend before buck Monday, and it feels like festival time in rural towns and mountain camps. Snow for buck season is a link between present and past, between orange coveralled hunters on the cusp of the year 2000 and their red-and-black wool-suited predecessors from a half-century or more ago. As much as the world has changed, snow for deer season means, in many respects, it can still be the same.

Ideally, snow should stay on the ground through the two weeks of buck season and linger for antlerless deer hunting. Snow makes the animals more visible to the hunter, and vice versa. The white landscape should be renewed by occasional fresh snowfalls, all traces of action erased, the slate ready to receive new signs of movement. The snow, though, should never get so deep as to seriously impede deer or

What's a buck season without snow? Watching a monotone woods for an animal that matches. But let it snow the weekend before buck Monday . . .

hunter movement. Then it becomes a spoiler.

During last year's antlerless season there was too much of a good thing. When my husband pulled the van off the Warren County road to park, I thought he'd driven into a drift. I turned to give him a "Why did you do that?" look, but he couldn't see it in the predawn dark. I opened my door, stepped out, and regretted the hasty blame. The snow was the same everywhere, thigh deep on a five and half footer like me.

We were nine that day, including two young people in search of their first deer. One was six inches shorter than me, and I was to think of him off and on all day as I slogged along. The road itself had been plowed, and several friends came running back to our vehicle.

"Do you believe this? Do you believe this?" they cried. "Do you believe how deep this snow is?"

Nothing Like It

As we loaded our packs and pockets with the day's needs, we wondered what the next hours would bring. It had been many years since the most experienced of us had hunted in snow of this depth, while the rest had never seen anything like it.

We marched single file across the flat to reach our stands on the sidehill. Although eight others were in front of me, it was difficult going. In such snow, they couldn't pack a trail, only churn it.

What had been a simple stroll in dry weather became a hard-won distance on this particular day. I thought our small group looked like it was braving arctic tundra, or, incongruously, trying to cross shifting desert dunes.

Luckily, my stand was the first reached. I'd watch the top, while the others fanned out along the mountainside. I left the trail and waded in a white sea, looking for a place to post. I felt lilliputian, half drowned,

so little of me was above the surface. I needed a higher vantage point for overlooking the terrain.

I found a long, white lump, which in cryptic snow language meant a wide, downed log. I could stand on the log and rest against an abutting oak to shoot. The log raised me, but not as much as I'd hoped. Much of its apparent height was snow and air.

Through the first few hours, the shots were all below me. I didn't know it, but that was the sound of my group, including the youngsters, taking their deer. Several times I started for the slope, but each time returned to my post. Going through the unbroken snow was too much effort, and the farther I got from my log, the better it appeared.

The deer, though, were by now in the hemlock bottom. I mustered energy to reach the edge and, like any North Pole explorer, steeled myself to face the difficulties. The way looked easier along a pile of cut tree tops, and I detoured in . . . and floundered. I had fallen into the snow and I couldn't get up!

The winds had dropped even more snow into the lee of the fallen branches and I was in too deep. I laughed out loud at my predicament. There was no elegant way out. I reached my rifle ahead and placed it atop the snow, and crawled, almost swam, my way out until I could touch bottom again.

Down along the creek, there were the expected deer tracks, less snow, and something else — tracks of a bear, whose short legs let his belly drag in the snow cover and left long-lined impressions of his fur sliding by.

I also found, later that afternoon, a doe to fill out my season. She had a band of white across her withers, and I had the hide tanned hair-on, white to remind me of the prevailing color of the day.

*But good God, people don't
do such things!*

— Henrik Ibsen

WHEN SAM Goodnight's dog barked, he looked out his kitchen window and saw two hunters. It was 8 a.m., the last day of doe season, and trespassers were once again on his land. He watched until they disappeared into the woods and his dog stopped barking.

Sam thought no more about the incident until he was leaving for work a half-hour later. He saw them again. This time they were dragging a deer across his neighbor's field. Sam drove over the snow-covered grass to question them.

The pair stood woodenly at his approach. One was a scrawny teenager, the other a man in his 40s. The man walked toward Sam. He had a small caliber rifle cradled in his arms. The teenager stayed at the edge of the woods.

"Who gave you permission to hunt here?" Sam asked.

"I'm sorry, I didn't realize we were on your land," the man responded.

Sam explained that this was his neighbor's property, but no one was allowed to hunt the area because too many houses were nearby.

The man shrugged sheepishly. "We didn't kill the deer near any houses," he said. "We got it a half-mile from here, up on the hill. It's just easier to bring it down this way." Sam looked at the deer and noticed that one spike seemed to be longer than three inches, making it an illegal deer.

At that point a dark blue Chevrolet pulled up. A man in his mid-20s got out and opened the trunk. He was 5-9 with curly hair protruding from a pink ball cap. Sam recognized him as Jasper Hood, a known troublemaker.

As Sam passed Hood's car he wrote the license number on the back of his hand. He reported the incident to dispatcher Brad Killian, who ran the license number and then contacted me

LOOKING BACK



By William Wasserman
Wildlife Conservation Officer
Wyoming County

with Hood's address. Deputy Marshall Stover happened to be patrolling near there, and he shortly called to say he'd found Jasper.

I arrived 15 minutes later; Jasper and Marshall were waiting outside. The dark blue Chevrolet had fresh blood and deer hair on the trunk, and Jasper's hands were covered with dried blood. Marshall said the deer was gone.

I'd arrested Hood for poaching deer two years earlier. His hunting privileges were still under revocation. Hood's first concern was that I was going to send him to jail.

"I have no reason to put you in jail, Jasper. Just show me the deer you had in your car. If it's legal, I'm outa here."

Jasper claimed he wasn't hunting, that someone else killed the deer and he was just transporting it for him.

"Just who was this person?"

"I don't know. I just met him today."

"Jasper, you gave me the same story two years ago, remember? And there was blood on your hands at that time, too, just like now."

Jasper was speechless for a moment, and then said, "Well, maybe I could make a phone call. Maybe he'll bring it over. My grandpop has a phone. He lives over there."

Hood pointed to a house a hundred yards away, and we drove over. He dialed a number and paced the kitchen floor, the receiver pressed to his ear.

"No answer," he said.

"Jasper," I asked, "if you don't know who took the deer, how did you know who to call?"

Staring at his sneakers, Jasper realized he had blown it. Brushing the hair from his eyes, he said quietly, "I want to talk to my wife. She's at the house."

Back at the trailer I found Marshall talking with two other fellows, Jasper's dad, Jocko, and a teenager named Billy Bludgeon. I called Marshall aside and told him about Jasper's phone call. But before Marshall could fill me in on what transpired while I was away, Jasper left Jocko and Billy, rejoined us, and said he wanted to go in and talk with his wife. After a few minutes, Jasper opened the front door and waved us in.

A 2-year-old girl smiled as we stepped inside. At least someone was glad to see us, I thought. She bounced happily on her mother's lap at the kitchen table. Jasper stood nervously behind them, "My wife has something to tell you," he said gravely.

Katie Hood, a slender blond, looked up calmly and said she shot the deer. Her little girl gurgled gleefully as if agreeing with the confession.

"What kind of gun did you use?"

"A shotgun."

"What gauge?"

"I don't know," she winced faintly.

"It's Jasper's gun, not mine."

"Do you have a doe license Mrs. Hood?"

"No."

"Where did you hit the deer?"

"In the shoulder."

Jasper had obviously told her where



Question

Is it legal to lean a loaded rifle or shotgun against a car or truck?

Answer

No. Aside from being unsafe, it is against the law to have a loaded firearm in or on or against any conveyance propelled by mechanical power or its attachments.

the deer had been hit, but failed to mention the type of firearm.

"Wanna see the deer?" Jasper cut in.

"Yes. Where is it?" I replied.

"C'mon," he waved, and Marshall and I followed.

Jasper took us to a large garage, and from behind an old dresser he pulled a cardboard box containing the head, hide and cut up parts of a spike buck. "That would be a legal deer if your wife had a doe license," I commented.

Marshall found a small bullet hole on the hide. We stepped outside while Hood went back inside the trailer. Marshall told me that while I had taken Jasper to make the phone call, he'd seen two people in the garage. It was Jocko and Billy, and they had been moving a dresser. Jocko had invited Marshall inside.

"My boy in some kind of trouble?" Jocko asked, wiping his hands. "I saw the other warden take him off in his Blazer."

"He might be," Marshall said, noticing traces of blood on Jocko and Billy's hands. "You wouldn't know anything about an illegal deer, would you?"

"Afraid not. Look around if you want."

Stover had seen three deer hides on the wooden floor; four sets of antlers hung from rafters. "Looks like somebody had a decent buck season," Marshall said.

"We did okay. One rack is mine, the others are Billy's, Katie's and Cody's."

"Cody?"

"My other son. He don't live here," Jocko said.

It was at that point that I'd returned with Jasper. Marshall said he suspected Jocko and Billy were involved, and when Jasper pulled the box of deer parts from behind the dresser they had just moved, his suspicions were confirmed.

Jocko did say we could look around, so Marshall and I walked through the garage and out the back doorway. On the snow, by the garage wall, we noticed something bundled inside a white cotton sheet. A faint bloodstain was on it. Marshall gingerly pulled back a loose corner. Inside we found hindquarters, shoulders and backstraps from several deer.

Jocko had left for work, but I went back and spoke privately with Billy about the little buck. He said he spent the morning babysitting while Katie and Jasper went hunting. He said Katie killed the spike, and that he and Jocko hid it because she didn't have a license.

As I finished questioning Billy, Jasper walked over. I took him to the back of the garage and showed him the meat Marshall and I had found.

"Who does this belong to?" I asked.

Billy stared calmly at the venison, but Jasper's eyes bulged and he started to tremble. "We don't know how that got there," he sputtered.

I continued to question them while Marshall stared at a small plastic swimming pool lying next to us, in front of the doorway. With all the other odds and ends scattered about, the pool wasn't that out of place, and had it not been directly in front of the doorway, Marshall probably wouldn't have given it a thought.

But then a tiny droplet fell from the garage roof and, with a faint metallic smack, landed in the empty swimming pool. Marshall's eyes darted upward. He began to laugh.

I had no idea what was so funny; the entire situation was hardly my idea of a good time. But Marshall kept laughing as he backed up through the snow.

"Come here, Bill," he said turning.

"What's so funny?" I asked.

"Just turn around," he said, still chuckling.

Convinced Marshall was losing his mind, I turned around and looked up. I couldn't believe my eyes. On the garage roof was dozens of deer part — hides, hindquarters, shoulders, all sorts of pieces.

"Seems you both have a lot of explaining to do," I told Jasper and Billy.

"I don't know nothing about that meat," Jasper exclaimed.

I sent Jasper inside while I talked to Billy. "We know you were in the garage with Jocko earlier. Both of you had blood on your hands. We know you helped conceal Jasper's deer behind the dresser. Don't make things worse; tell me what's going on here."

Billy nodded stiffly, and then told me he and Jocko had thrown the venison

Commission 800 Numbers

Within Pennsylvania, use the agency's toll-free 800 numbers to contact a wildlife conservation officer. For the Northwest Region, call (800) 533-6764; Southwest, (800) 243-8519; Northcentral, (800) 422-7551; Southcentral, (800) 422-7554; Northeast, (800) 228-0789; and Southeast (800) 228-0791. Phones will be manned around the clock during the major hunting seasons, and about 15 hours a day at other times.

up on the roof while Marshall and I were talking to Jasper.

"We almost got it all up there, but when the officer started walking over, we quickly covered the rest with a sheet," Billy said.

"Whose deer are they?"

"I don't know about all of them. One is mine; one is Jocko's. We got them Monday."

"Do you have a doe license?"

"No."

I sent Billy inside.

"What made you look up?" I asked Marshall.

"The swimming pool seemed out of place," he said. "Then a drop of blood fell into the pool. That made me look up, and there it was — deer city."

Marshall nudged the pool aside, revealing snow-packed bloody footprints underneath. "They drug the deer parts out the doorway and piled them here, then tossed them on the roof. The pool covered everything," he said.

"I'm going to Tunkhannock for some search warrants," I said. "Don't let Jasper leave. I want him here when we search his father's house. I'll bet his freezer is full of venison, too."

Two hours elapsed before I returned. We searched Jasper's trailer first but found nothing, then went to Jocko's house. Marshall proceeded to the refrigerator in the kitchen and opened the freezer compartment. It was jammed tight with deer meat — cut and wrapped — and a palomino trout almost two feet long.

"Nice trout," I said.

"I caught him in White's Creek," grinned Jasper.

It was a magnificent trout, the kind most anglers can only dream about. I felt certain Jasper didn't catch it legally.

Deputy Stover and I took the venison and stacked it outside, then searched the rest of the house. By 3:30, all that remained was the garage. I told Jasper and Billy they could go, and Marshall and I broke for lunch. I had

picked up hamburgers, fries and drinks on the way back from Tunkhannock.

"Boy, that was some trout," Marshall said as we sat and ate.

"Sure was," I agreed. "No way he got it legally, though. Jasper's hardly the sporting type."

"Maybe he used chemicals. I know some that will rob oxygen from the water and kill every fish."

"Bet he used a cherry bomb," I said, taking a bite from my burger.

"I saw the results once," said Marshall, disregarding my comment about the bomb, "dead fish everywhere."

"Too sophisticated," I said. "Cherry bombs are more his style."

"Boy, was I hungry," Marshall said, changing the subject. "How much do I owe you?"

"Forget it."

"Gee, I'd hug you but people might talk."

"That's okay," I said dryly, "a thank you is sufficient," and we both burst out laughing at once.

We took the deer parts from the roof, along with the venison in the white sheet and the hides and antlers from the garage, and began loading everything in my Blazer.

"I know who turned us in," Jasper declared in an ugly tone, "and something's gonna happen to him."

"What'd you say?" I said.

"Nobody'll be able to touch me either," he continued, "cause I won't be the one who does it."

"Let me clue you in on something," I said. "You've just incriminated yourself by making that statement. Retribution against a witness is a felony. If anything happens — and I mean *anything* — I'll personally arrest you for it. If my informant so much as catches a cold you're going to jail. Got it."

"Hey, man, lighten up. I was just kidding."

"I don't think so."

"Yeah, well . . . I gotta go."

"I wish you would."

All told, we had one deer head, 12 hides, 9 backstraps, 9 hindquarters, 13 shoulders, 1 box of venison scraps, 4 racks and assorted antlers, and about 40 pounds of packaged, frozen deer meat. Each package was labeled, indicating parts of three deer had been in the freezer.

It was turning dark. We had finished putting everything in my vehicle and were about to leave when a car pulled in.

"What's going on?" a young man asked gravely. He had a square jaw and blond hair.

"Who are you?" I asked.

"Cody Hood. This is my dad's place."

"We just finished conducting a search here. Anything belong to you?" I asked, nodding toward my Blazer.

Cody peered into the back of my vehicle, "One of the racks is mine. Got him in buck season. Some of the meat could be from my deer."

"Well, right now it's evidence."

"Did you take the trout?"

"No. But it's the only thing left in the freezer. You're brother's pretty lucky to catch a fish like that."

"Yeah, he caught it with his bare hands," exclaimed Cody. "Kicked it right out of the water and grabbed it up on the bank . . ."

"Whoa, don't say anything else," I said. "It's illegal to catch a fish that way, and your brother is in enough trouble."

Cody took my advice and stood silent. He seemed so proud of his big brother.

I could see good in Cody, but his brother and father were a strong influence. I knew he would soon face a crossroad in life and I hoped he'd make the right decision.

Do you think you might see your father tonight?" I asked.

"Probably."

"Ask him to call me."

"Okay."

That night, Jocko called. I spoke with him briefly, asking him to meet me

at the State Police barracks the next morning. He agreed.

Jocko was waiting when Deputy Stover and I arrived. I escorted him into the interview room, then had Marshall contact Sam Goodnight and ask him to come to the barracks.

"You realize you're not under arrest, Mr. Hood," I said, stepping into the room.

Jocko nodded soberly, indicating he understood. "That's okay, I want to get this off my chest," he said. "What I did was wrong."

"Tell me about it."

"That's why I came here. Three of the deer you took are illegal: One I shot, and one is Billy's — got them on the first day. We don't have doe licenses." Jocko paused, then sighed deeply.

"Katie shot the spike yesterday; Jasper just hauled it for her. He didn't do anything wrong, honest. I don't want anything to happen to him."

"You mean to tell me that of all the deer we took, only three were illegal."

"Yes sir."

Mr. Hood, we found evidence of at least 15 deer at your place. What about the rest?"

Jocko stared wistfully; the corners of his mouth drew down. "Four were killed in buck season: Cody, Billy, Katie and I each killed one," he said with eyes imploring trust, boring into mine. There was a beguiling naivete about Jocko. He was a hardcore poacher who had perfected a convincing and shrewd veneer. I wondered how many had been conned by his harmless appearance.

"Okay," I said. That's seven deer, four legal and three illegal. What about the other eight?"

Jocko shrugged, "You really shouldn't count all the hides. I found some along the road."

A knock at the door interrupted us. It was Deputy Stover; Sam Goodnight had arrived. I was anxious to find out if Jocko was one of the men he had found on his neighbor's property.

Looking through one-way glass, Sam immediately identified Jocko as the one he had spoken with, and after I described Billy Bludgeon, Goodnight said my description fit the younger man who stood back in the woods. I then asked Goodnight if a woman had been with them, and he said definitely not. I stepped back into the interview room.

"Jocko," I said, "I want to be sure about something."

"Anything at all, sir. I'm here to tell you the truth and pay my fine."

"Who shot the spike buck yesterday?"

"Katie."

"How do you know?"

"I heard the shot and walked back into the woods. She was standing there with a rifle, Jasper was with her but didn't have a gun."

"Katie told me she used a shotgun."

"Did I say rifle? I meant shotgun."

"Then what happened?"

"I told them they shouldn't have done it, had a few choice words with them, and left."

"That's strange."

"What?"

"You, saying they shouldn't have done it, after illegally killing one yourself on the first day."

Jocko said nothing. His story was falling apart and he knew it.

"Jocko, you're lying," I said in my best monotone."

"No I'm not . . . really."

"An eyewitness," I said, pointing at the mirror, "said no woman was around. That it was just you, Billy Bludgeon and Jasper. And the deer wasn't shot with a shotgun."

Jocko's jaw set and his eyes narrowed. For a moment I thought he'd explode, then his face softened. "This whole thing is my fault," he muttered. "I'm willing to take full responsibility

and pay the entire fine. How much is it?"

"You won't be the only one charged," I replied. "Jasper, Billy and Katie must also face penalties."

After I filed my charges, the Hoods hired an eccentric, and in my opinion, unscrupulous attorney, and the court battles raged. Jasper's trial lasted eight grueling hours (probably a record length for a summary trial). Katie's trial dragged on for six.

After appeals at county court, the district justice's verdicts were upheld. Jocko's fines totaled \$8,000, which he agreed to pay in \$200 monthly increments. Jasper pleaded guilty to hunting while on revocation (a plea bargain was approved and additional fines dropped), and fined \$100. Katie Hood was found guilty of making false statements, conspiracy and interfering with a lawful investigation. She received a \$1,500 penalty. Billy Bludgeon pleaded guilty to hunting without a doe license, unlawful killing of deer, and conspiracy. He received a \$1,100 fine. All defendants had their hunting and trapping privileges revoked for many years.

And so ends this episode with the Hood Clan, but there is far more to tell. Jasper ended up in jail for a probation violation, Jocko threatened to start shooting people, and Cody was Deputy Stover's first arrest of the new year. Perhaps, one day, I'll write the details for you. It's a story in itself.

I have enjoyed writing this column. I started these accounts more than a year ago, working several hours each day. And aside from using fictitious names, the stories have been true. I hope through this column that you've learned a little more about the job of a wildlife conservation officer, along with some of our challenges, frustrations and responsibilities.

Christmas in Honduras

LAST DECEMBER my husband, Bruce, and I were awakened early Christmas morning by an assortment of strange bird calls. Greeting the dawn, outside the screened windows of our cabin, were at least a few of the 373 tropical and temperate bird species recorded in the Lago de Yojoa region of Honduras over the last quarter century.

Unlike most birding "hot spots," this place has not yet been discovered by the international bird watching set. The other cabins were occupied by vacationing Hondurans more interested in rest, relaxation and fishing on the nation's largest lake. Studded with islands and surrounded by steep-sided mountains — including 9,527 foot-high Cerro Santa Barbara — the 18-mile-long lake offers one of Honduras's most beautiful vistas.

Not that we had lacked scenery in the earlier portion of our three-week holiday. Our youngest son, Mark, who was then serving as a Peace Corps Natural Resources volunteer in this Pennsylvania-size Central American country, had planned a tour for us that emphasized the natural diversity of Honduras—cloud forests, lowland tropical forests, mangrove swamps, the Caribbean coast and extensive pine forests.

We had already heard, but not seen, the resplendent quetzals along the trails of La Muralla, one of the most accessible of Honduras's 37 cloud forest parks. In addition,

we had explored Cuero y Salado Park — a mangrove swamp — by boat and had seen such birds as boat-billed herons, green kingfishers and northern jacanas; we had participated in the third annual Honduran Christmas Bird Count, at Lancetilla Botanical Garden near the Caribbean coast, where we had gawked at a tree filled with keel-billed toucans.

In less than two hours we had climbed 1,700 feet up through the pine forests of Celaque Park and stopped to admire a large flock of orange and black, slate-throated redstarts. Even the magnificent Mayan ruins at Copan — a remnant, second-growth tropical forest surrounded by farms — provided rewarding bird watching, most notably the turquoise-browed and blue-crowned motmots trailing glamorous tails longer than their brilliant, blue and green bodies.

Best of all, we had taken a strenuous hike with Mark and 40 Honduran friends and schoolchildren in the lower portion of Sierra de Agalta — a cloud forest park in the far eastern province of Olancho, which was Mark's special focus as a volunteer. There we saw our first emerald toucanets and heard the ethereal song of the slate-colored solitaire.

Like many people who visit foreign countries, I was also searching for the familiar in the mostly unfamiliar setting. And I found not only some of the same mammals we have in Pennsylvania — a gray fox and white-tailed deer at Copan, a raccoon at Cuero y Salado, and a river otter

By Marcia Bonta



The Naturalist's Eye

in Olancho — but many of “our” birds as well. These species, known as neotropical migrants, spend their winters south of the U.S. border and their summers nesting and raising families in the United States and Canada.

As a bird watcher concerned about the recently documented decline of neotropicals, I was almost as interested in seeing “our” birds on their wintering grounds as I was in seeing Honduras’ native species.

I had plenty of opportunities to watch “our” birds, and I was somewhat surprised to find them in a variety of settings: sus-

tainable farms, coffee plantations, heavily pastured fields, small villages and, of course, the more pristine parks.

For instance, in the mangrove swamp we found white-eyed vireos, Louisiana water thrushes, and black-and-white, hooded and magnolia warblers. Celaque’s pine forests had attracted flocks of solitary vireos and black-throated green warblers; Wilson’s warblers preferred the edges of second-growth cloud forests as well as a restaurant courtyard sapling in a large town.

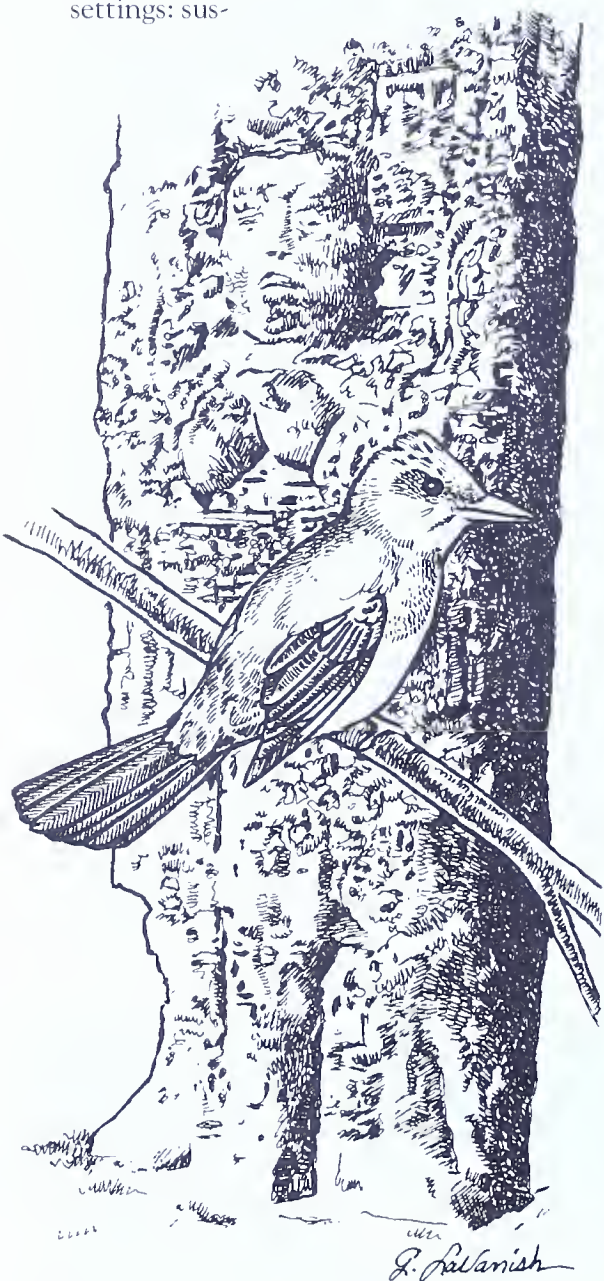
At Copan we found more black-and-white and Wilson’s warblers in addition to American redstarts, great-crested flycatchers, northern orioles and blue-gray gnatcatchers. Except for the Wilson’s, all are abundant nesters on our Pennsylvania mountaintop.

Most telling of all had been the numbers and species of “our” birds recorded on the Honduran Christmas Bird Count. Four teams had scoured several lakes and mangrove swamps, secondary gallery forests, a portion of the Caribbean beach and a transitional rain forest — the only part of the count which had taken place above sea level.

Of the 7,873 birds counted (which included 5,000 tree swallows) U.S. and Canadian breeders accounted for most of the numbers and a large portion of the species. The count recorded 14 warbler species: American redstarts and magnolia warblers were the most abundant, followed by common yellowthroats, yellow, chestnut-sided, and black-and-white warblers. My one contribution to the count was a hooded warbler skulking in the underbrush of Lancetilla Botanical Garden.

Up until the Christmas count, our bird watching had been hard work — hours of sweating up and down steep trails, trying to identify birds hidden by thick foliage. But at Lago de Yojoa the pace was slow, the visibility excellent.

We spent hours at the corner table on the elevated veranda of the main lodge, eating leisurely meals, drinking innumerable fresh fruit drinks and watching birds — those at treetop level and those out in the



marshes and lake directly in front and below us.

Limpkins, fulvous whistling ducks, common moorhens, northern jacanas, great blue herons and great white egrets waded in the marshes or swam in the water. Common yellowthroats, yellow warblers, Louisiana water thrushes, yellow-rumped warblers, and northern and orchard orioles foraged in a huge pine tree beside the porch.

But Mark insisted on canoeing around the marshes so we could flush hidden waterfowl. Large flocks of black-bellied and fulvous whistling ducks streamed overhead, and the lake reverberated with the continual calling of common moorhens and boat-tailed grackles. A purple gallinule flew up directly in front of our canoe, then slinked off into the reeds, while a snail kite landed on a nearby tree to preen itself. We spent a lot of time juggling binoculars and canoe paddles, especially when the wind picked up.

Mostly we hugged the marshy lake edges, but we did cross a narrow strip of open water, aiming for a 20-acre island. We were greeted by the caretaker's family, which included 13 children of assorted ages. Two dark-skinned, brown-eyed young boys, the older wielding a machete, were assigned by their father to show us the island.

We followed them through an overgrown garden to a Mayan stone with a hole in the middle, sole evidence of the previous occupants. Then we climbed up a hill through heavily overgrown rain forest, and I nervously asked Mark about snakes.

"Don't worry," he answered. "They like trails better than underbrush anyway."

So I tried to relax and enjoy the calling of "our" wood thrushes, along with clay-colored robins, which sounded much like American robins, slate-colored solitaires and little tinamous. A spider monkey cavorted in a grapefruit tree. Louisiana water thrushes teetered on buttressed tree trunks. Enormous blue *Morpho* butterflies floated

Fun Games

A Gift for Wildlife

By Connie Mertz

From the list below, circle those species that are NOT found in Pennsylvania.

- | | |
|--------------------|------------------------|
| (P) Black Bear | (Y) Fox Squirrel |
| (H) Wolverine | (D) Snowshoe Hare |
| (T) Brown Bear | (A) Jackrabbit |
| (E) Bobwhite Quail | (B) Moose |
| (N) Common Snipe | (I) Mule Deer |
| (T) Cougar | (L) Eastern Cottontail |
| (S) Elk | (A) Spruce Grouse |

Copy the letters to your choices and unscramble the word which is the greatest gift we can give to all wildlife species.

answers on p. 62

past, and even larger, brown and beige butterflies flapped along like small birds.

Despite the beauty, though, I was relieved when we returned to the caretaker's home. As we stood talking on the beach with the youngsters who had taken us around and who, despite the obvious poverty of the family, wore boots, they told us that the island had three kinds of poisonous snakes—fer de lances, green vipers and coral snakes—in addition to opossums, armadillos, squirrels, keel-billed toucans and collared aracarís.

Mark had the decency to look slightly abashed. And both of us decided that exploring by canoe might be a bit safer than plunging into second-growth rain forest.

Northern rough-winged swallows circled above the island and, in the reeds at the water's edge, ruddy-breasted seedeaters foraged with yellow warblers. Limpkins occasionally flopped off from a tree branch and, as we paddled across open water, a wild Muskovy duck flew past, headed for the island.

Back on shore, we decided to walk around the roughly cut grounds of the lodge in search of songbirds. We were more than rewarded by good views of golden-fronted woodpeckers, a tropical parula in a mango tree, and a nice array of warblers: American redstarts, black-throated green, yellow-throated, hooded, black-and-white and magnolia.

We spent the rest of the day at our favorite table on the veranda, protected from occasional downpours and mesmerized by the peace and beauty surrounding us. Clouds hovered over the mountain peaks, but shafts of sunlight frequently broke through, and the lake glowed in the filtered light.

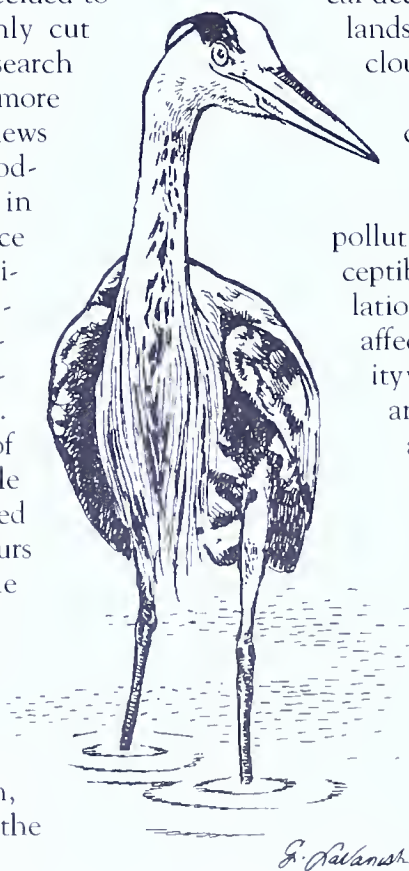
A Montezuma oropendola serenaded us as we ate lunch. As the afternoon ebbed and flowed we watched a continually changing panorama of bird life: a least grebe floating on the lake, chestnut-headed oropendulas gossiping in the trees, a little blue heron foraging in the marsh. Once a pair of yellow-winged tanagers vied with a golden-fronted woodpecker for unknown tropical fruit on a nearby tree. A great egret flew past. This was bird watching at its finest.

Later, the lodge owner proudly showed me her copy of Donald H. Baepler's *Birds Recorded from the Lago de Yojoa Region*. Baepler is director of the Harry Reid Center for Environmental Studies at the Marjorie Barrick Museum of Natural History at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas.

"Lago de Yojoa and its surrounding area contain one of the richest avifaunas in Central America," Baepler writes. He attributes the area's wealth of bird life to its ecological diversity—a mixture of tropical deciduous forest and agricultural lands, some areas of pine forest, and cloud forests.

Baepler mentions that increased human population has led to some deforestation, which, in turn, has increased pollution, but he could find no perceptible influence on local bird populations. The only birds adversely affected by the increase of humanity were toucans and parrots, which are often captured by humans and kept as pets or sold in the still-lucrative bird trade.

On the other hand, when I corresponded with him later, he sent me a marvelous photograph of a pair of keel-billed toucans that had nested on the lodge grounds in April 1992. He also said he believed at least 40 to 50 more bird species could be added to the 373 he has already recorded.





WISE is the hunter who studies and takes into account his quarry's senses. Deer rely on hearing, along with sight and smell, to alert them to possible dangers. Of the three bucks above, the two young ones are mildly curious, while the mature buck in the background is fully aware something is amiss.

Sounding the Alarm

By Keith C. Schuyler

EXPERIENCED bowhunters are familiar with the three senses deer use to avoid humans: smell, sight and hearing. It doesn't take long to realize that the animal depends upon those highly developed senses in just that order, with hearing the least dependable.

But many hunters don't realize how deer combine these senses to their advantage. That combination makes deer a formidable quarry, particularly for the bowhunter who must get extremely close to the animal. Watching a wild deer when it thinks it's not observed is a practical lesson in what we are up against.

There are those of us who suspect white-tailed deer and other wild creatures have a

sixth sense to supplement the basic five. There are times when we seem to have everything under control and our quarry makes a move that smacks of extrasensory perception.

This "sixth sense" seems most evident when there is more than one animal. A herd of deer reacts simultaneously to a



danger signal perceptible to perhaps only one of its members. Flocks of birds respond as one as they rise from the ground or water.

Audio communication outside the hearing range of lowly humans may be involved. If so, that's just more reason to respect a deer's reaction to sound. I've seen deer take off at just the snap of a tiny twig underfoot. But I've also had times when I couldn't chase a deer off by making noise.

Couldn't Chase Them Away

I was in a tree stand one evening taking photos of two does. After I had all the shots I needed and not wanting the deer to see me descending the tree, I called out to frighten them away. They did go on alert, but they otherwise ignored me. I shouted, pounded on the tree trunk, whistled and stomped my feet. One finally left. The other continued to feed, pinning me to my perch long past when I'd intended to leave. It gradually drifted away far enough for me to exit the tree unseen.

On the other hand, the very morning I wrote this column, a doe with two fawns roused me from sleep when she snorted or coughed under an apple tree outside our second floor bedroom. I woke my wife so she could enjoy them, and when I whispered to her to look at one of the fawns, the doe heard me — 20 yards away and 24 feet above her. She turned, stiff-legged, and led the fawns hurriedly from the yard.

Extremes? Perhaps. But in my experience, I've found deer are more apt to flee from a sound they cannot identify than one

that they can, whether it poses a threat to them or not. I'm not saying they'll react like that all the time — there are no absolutes in hunting.

You've likely been watching deer when there is a gunshot nearby, a truck shifting gears on a highway, children shouting at play, or dogs barking. In most instances, the deer will do no more than just casually glance toward the sound. To a deer, a gunshot may be no different than a vehicle backfiring, or perhaps the noise is so sharp and brief that it cannot be pinpointed. These and many other noises are common, especially in the more heavily populated areas of the state.

But move one of these sounds to an unnatural location, and the deer's reaction will be far different. It is not the sound per se that alerts the animal, but rather a misplaced noise that disrupts an area's normal audio pattern. The deer will move to a safer spot, or it may actually move toward the sound to determine by sight or scent if a threat exists.

If you make a sound a deer thinks might be threatening, it may sneak up on you to investigate. That's why if you crack a branch under foot, stumble or momentarily lose your balance, it is best to freeze for a spell. Always assume there's a deer nearby — many times you will be right.

If you don't move, a curious deer may come to investigate. If it can't pick you out, the animal may stomp in a ploy to get you to move and confirm its suspicions. Or it may stretch its neck from side to side or

COVER PAINTING BY TAYLOR OUGHTON

Coyotes are probably the most misunderstood animal in Pennsylvania. Some people despise them, others are fascinated by them. Some people are afraid of them, some take full advantage of the hunting and trapping opportunities they offer, and others feel they should be totally protected. This wide variety of thoughts and emotions is largely because coyotes are relative newcomers to Pennsylvania. Or, as some believe, the animal has just been absent from the state for a hundred or more years. Either way, the animal seems firmly established here now, for each of us to enjoy in our own way.

A limited edition of 50 hand-colored signed and numbered prints of this month's cover is available from the artist. Image size is 15 x 22½ inches. Price is \$80 each, delivered. Order from Taylor Oughton, P.O. Box 355, Jamison, PA 18929.

lower its head to get a different perspective.

When searching for a sound's origin, a deer will extend its ear cups for the same reason we cup our hands around our ears to increase audio perception. A deer's ear cups are six times larger than ours, and its frequency attenuation is far superior to that of a human — it can hear over a greater range of sounds.

If the deer disappears without evidence that it has spotted you, it may be moving downwind of you in order to put its almost infallible nose to work. You may be located by scent without ever realizing a deer has bested you at this game of hide and seek.

It is not always noise that alerts deer. An errant breeze may send just enough of your scent to agitate but not alarm the animal and, as a result, cause you to become the object of a visual hunt.

Any of these situations can be aggravated by some action on your part. Loose change, car keys and other objects can make noise that goes unnoticed by you but alerts animals whose lives depend on their ability to detect unnatural noises. Remember, what is or isn't alarming to a deer often depends largely on circumstance.

A couple years ago a companion and I spotted a doe and fawn at close range. Neither of us was interested in shooting, so we tried to see how much disturbance the deer would tolerate before leaving. My companion began to toss pebbles toward the animals. His aim was bad, but the doe investigated each small stone after it landed. All we could assume was that she thought they were acorns.

One morning, during that most important time right after sunrise, an opossum literally ruined a still-hunt for me when it decided to roam an area of large, dry leaves. The noise could be heard for a long way, and my futile efforts to

frighten it away with pieces of dead limb only aggravated the situation.

When the woods are windy and leaves and twigs are flying, accidental noises may go unnoticed. Deer are less apt to be moving in such situations, unless they're disturbed, and when they do, they are extremely alert. Deer behave accordingly when vegetation is moving in the wind, scents are disseminated wildly, and sounds are virtually indistinguishable against the general tumult of noise.

Some hunters believe these are good conditions for stalking or still-hunting bedded deer. Although the wind and noise may seem to favor the hunter, the deer will be unusually alert — knowing their senses are less reliable than normal.

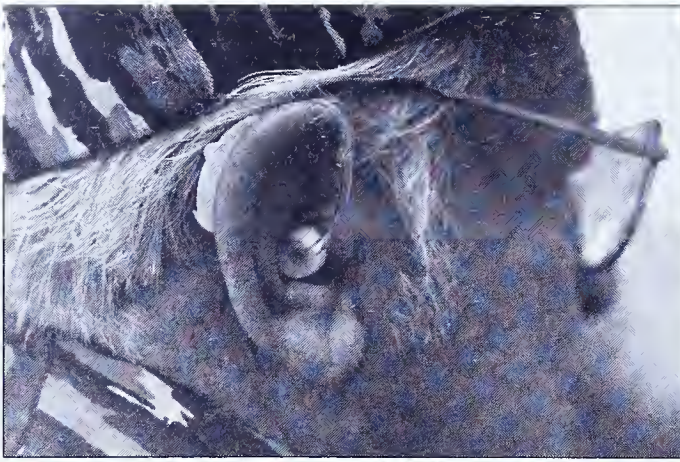
Consider Staying Home

If strong wind is combined with rain, consider staying home and watching television. A gentle rain, however, can help the hunter. Rain-softened twigs are far more resilient and less apt to snap, leaves are soft underfoot, and brush is less noisy against outer garments. While all sounds are somewhat subdued in the patter of rain and deadened air, the deer are working under the same advantages and are better adapted to slip silently among the trees. And remember that if you make noises under these conditions they will be more noticeable in an otherwise quiet forest.

Of course, this discussion applies mostly while the hunter is moving to a stand or while still-hunting. Once you are settled into position, there's much less chance you'll spook animals with noise. But there are still cautions to observe. Coughing or



IN THIS instance, the doe's ears indicate she's suspicious of something she's heard. The trailing buck, however, is still unaware of any possible threat.



HEARING AIDS, such as Walker's Game Ear, designed specifically for hunting, shooting and other outdoor activities, protect a person's ears from muzzle blast and other loud noises, yet don't reduce or muffle normal woodland sounds.

movement can be a sure give-away.

A number of auditory aids are designed specifically for the hunter. I tried Bob Walker's

clearing your throat, or shifting your position should be done with care.

I have found a way to subdue the sounds of coughs. I simply shove a handkerchief as far back in my mouth as possible without gagging. Then hold my fingers firmly against my lips and let 'er go. This greatly reduces if not eliminates the sound of a cough, which is normally amplified by the megaphone effect of an open mouth.

Bowhunters must assume every sound is made by their quarry. A gray squirrel may sound more like a deer moving through the woods than a deer itself. But the worst reaction a hunter can make is to quickly turn toward any suspicious sound. Such a

Game Ear (P.O. Box 1069, Dept. GC, Media, PA 19063) which my fellow columnist Don Lewis described last February. This safety device is essentially a hearing aid that helps hunters detect woodland sounds, yet it also protects the ears against loud noises such as gunshots by reducing sound levels to those that won't damage hearing. I found it to live up to its billing.

It's obvious hunters should do everything possible to reduce or eliminate sounds foreign to the wildlife scene. By the same token, it is important to know the sounds that are made by the creatures we seek. It's all part of the contest between the hunter and the hunted.

Books in Brief...

(Order from the publisher, not from the Game Commission)

Two New Peterson Field Guide Coloring Books, Houghton Mifflin Co., 215 Park Ave. South, NYC 10003, \$4.95 each. Coloring and coloring books are not just for kids. Nature lovers of all ages will be impressed with these two new editions in a series of finely detailed and informative books. One is on insects and the other is on deserts. Each book features 200 or so illustrations ready to be colored. To guide the user, included in each volume are color plates with all the illustrations in full color. As Roger Tory Peterson says in his foreword, these coloring books are guides for those who want to sharpen their powers of observation. By transferring — in this case, coloring — images from your mind onto paper, you'll become more aware of the natural world. Birds, dinosaurs, endangered wildlife and wildflowers are four of the 12 other coloring books in this series.

Great Sausage Recipes and Meat Curing, by Rytek Kutas, The Sausage Maker, Inc., 26 Military Rd., Buffalo, NY 14207, 500 pp., hardbound \$24.95. With more than 175 recipes and 200 illustrations and photographs, this expanded, revised edition offers everything the do-it-yourselfer needs to make his own sausage products, out of beef, pork and venison. Detailed chapters on curing and smoking meats, casings, and recommendations for selecting and storing meat will get the reader started. Then there are recipes for making everything from pastrami and pepperoni to breakfast sausage and trail bologna.



THE FIRST SHOT is normally the most important in any type of hunting situation, and in those instances such as squirrel hunting, in which extreme accuracy is the key, it's important that the shooter knows where that first shot — one out of a cold barrel — is going to go.

First Shot Accuracy

By Don Lewis

Photos by Helen Lewis

RAIN DROPS pattering on dry leaves is normally a soothing sound, but on this hunt it was most unwelcome. With less than an hour of hunting time left, I was afraid the rain would keep all the squirrels inside, and I was anxious to try out a new .22 Mag. rifle.

I had seen a squirrel duck into a den tree about 40 yards away, and as I pushed hard against a black oak, it dawned on me that no squirrel in its right mind would venture out in this downpour. But just as quickly as the storm came, the rain stopped and the winds died. As a faint ray of evening sun broke through the treetops, the squirrel

came back out of its den and moved quickly down the tree trunk.

It stopped a few yards from the ground, but I didn't shoot because a pasture filled with cattle lay beyond my target. Luckily, the gray jumped to the ground and bounded across the wet leaves and up a large dead



snag no more than 50 yards away. A minute later, it came down within inches of the ground and perched at the base of the trunk. I had a solid two-point rest on top of a battered stump and was able to freeze the scope reticle on the back of the squirrel's shoulders — a perfect sight picture.

The crosshairs never moved as I squeezed the trigger. With literally everything in my favor, this shot should have put meat on the table, but at the gun's report, only the thump of a slug hitting wood echoed back. The squirrel spiraled in the air and raced up the tree. It didn't appear hit, but I knew the bullet had to be close to get that kind of reaction.

I was using a Model 141-M Savage/Anschutz .22 Mag. And while the rifle was no one-holer, I had cut a half-dozen 5-shot groups smaller than an inch at 50 yards. Taken more than 20 years ago, that shot taught me a lot about "first shot" accuracy.

Dejected, I was about to head for my vehicle and call it a day when the squirrel reappeared. Again using the stump for a rest, I took the same sight picture and squeezed the trigger. As far as I was concerned, the second shot was a duplicate of the first. The only difference was that this time I didn't hit wood first. It took 52 long steps to reach the dead squirrel.

That shot changed my entire philosophy on accuracy. I didn't form any solid opinions right on the spot, but I began thinking about the nice groups I had fired with the Anschutz. It struck me that all were fired from a warm barrel. Perhaps the cold weather that day caused the first shot to go astray.

As I looked back over the years, I remembered getting tighter groups after the barrel warmed. Was it possible the first shot from all rifles missed the sight-in point? Perhaps first shot accuracy is more important than many hunters think — if they think about it at all.

I think it's fair to say that most hunters believe the first shot is just as accurate as subsequent shots. I had believed that, too.

On a still, cold evening a week later, I placed the .22 Mag. on the inside rest and flipped on the range lights. After getting a solid hold on the one-inch white square in the middle of the four-inch black square, I squeezed the trigger. A look through the spotting scope dampened my spirits considerably. The bullet hole was in the black square, more than inch to the right of the white one. I fired again, and the second round cut the edge of the white center square. The gun was still shooting to the right.

The next four or five shots fell well inside the white square. I was satisfied that the rifle was hitting dead on. To simulate squirrel hunting conditions, I placed the gun on the shop porch to see what impact an hour of 29-degree temperature would do. The results were pretty much the same.

The first shot struck a good half-inch directly above the white square, and the second was just underneath — again, in the black square. The third shot hit the right hand corner of the white square, and two following shots stayed in the white.

While telling a friend about my experience, he offered to bring his favorite rimfire, a Remington 513-S Sporter. He claimed it was extremely accurate, and that he had shot dozens of squirrels with it — first with peep sights and later with a 10x scope. He assured me the 513-S



A SHOOTER serious about obtaining the best accuracy out of his rifle — be it a tack driving rimfire for the squirrel woods or a prized big game rifle — should test a variety of ammunition or loads to see which works best in his particular firearm.

had first shot accuracy — with any kind of ammo — in any type of weather, and he volunteered to prove it.

He arrived at my range one cold Saturday afternoon. He had several boxes of Winchester high velocity ammo, his favorite for squirrels and a good shooter in the Remington.

Once getting the sandbags and spotting scope adjusted, he fired at a fresh target. After a long look through the spotting scope, he replied, "I must have pulled that shot down."

"Maybe you're not zeroed in for 50 yards," I said. "You're down about two inches. Try another shot with the same sight picture."

He said he'd zeroed one inch high at 25 yards, which should've put him right on at 50. I told him to shoot a 5-shot group on another target. His efforts proved disappointing. The group formed low and to the left and measured 1¾ inches center to center of the two widest holes. A second 5-shot group was not much better.

I suggested that he try some target ammo, and after a bit of convincing he fired a couple groups with Winchester Match EZXS. The first group was tighter than the groups from his high speed fodder, and the second stayed under an inch. After shooting the rifle in with EZXS, it was placed outside to cool.

It was the same story. The first shot landed in the black to the left, the second was just inside the white, and the next three literally cut one hole in the white square. After the rifle was put out for an additional 45 minutes in 26-degree temperatures, the first round of match ammo hit the black just to the right of the white square. The next four shots were scattered in the white.

While the sporter was accurate with target fodder when its barrel was warm, it didn't have true first shot accuracy from a cold barrel. Why did this man, along with thousands of rimfire squirrel hunters, do so well with open sights?

Not that long ago, most squirrel hunters used shotguns. Squirrels are small and tough. To make a clean kill, it was imperative to

get close — most shots were well under 35 yards. Using a rifle with open sights didn't change the technique much; stalking was still the name of the game. Hunters were successful with rifles that were less than accurate with their first shots because most shots were under 30 yards.

Here's an example: A hunter is 20 yards from a tree, and the squirrel is 16 yards up. This more or less forms a right-angle triangle. The bullet would be traveling on the triangle's hypotenuse, which on this shot would cover approximately 25 yards. That doesn't sound like a long shot, but in timber, brush and grapevines, it's long enough.

How did the run-of-the-mill open sight rifles of the past perform so well on squirrels? For one thing, a gun that shoots a group as large as 2½ inches at 50 yards is probably shooting under an inch at 15 or 20 yards — a likely range for a hunter using open sights.

Don't Lose Confidence

I haven't learned why so few rifles — regardless of caliber — fail to have "first shot" accuracy, but it's no reason to lose confidence in your gun. Big game hunters have no worries because they are shooting at large targets. A 2-inch flyer makes little difference on a target area as large as 15 inches. Varmint hunters shoot enough on a hunt to keep their barrels warm.

For the hunter who pursues squirrels with a rimfire, his is a tougher lot. It's important to test a variety of ammo because many rimfires tend to be finicky about what they'll shoot well. After extensive testing, the shooter will likely find a brand of ammunition that tends to give first shot accuracy. This means testing from a cold, unfired barrel, which will require a good bit of range time. But the effort will not be wasted.

High quality target fodder is my first choice, and it has more than enough punch for squirrel hunting. I keep testing though, but I'm beginning to think it's just an excuse to keep shooting. Regardless, the hunter who knows where his first shot is going will do well in the squirrel woods.

In the wind

j. scott rupp



As part of an outreach program, the Wyoming Game and Fish Department mailed more than 240 backyard wildlife study kits to more than 100 retirement homes, nursing homes and senior citizen centers. The wildlife kits included a disassembled bird house and feeder, bird seed, suet, seeds of plants preferred by wildlife, and a bird identification book.

Waterfowl U.S.A. recently funded an education program for the Boy Scouts. The National Wood Duck Management Program enabled Scouts to earn merit badges while learning about the waterfowling heritage.

New York's conservation department has begun restoring wild turkey populations on Long Island, *Outdoor Life* reports. Wild turkeys haven't existed on the island for two centuries. Forty-nine birds were trapped and transferred last spring, and released on two Suffolk County sites.

Maine reported a record number of piping plover nesting this year. Twenty-nine pairs of the endangered birds nested in the state this year — more than double 1992's total.

A *Colorado Outdoors* article on camping included a list of how many years some common litter items last:

cigarette butts	1 to 5
aluminum cans and tabs	80 to 100
plastic six-pack holders	100
orange and banana peels	up to 2
plastic film containers	20-30
plastic bags	10-20
glass bottles	1 million
plastic-coated paper	5
plastic bottles	indefinitely
nylon fabric	30 to 40
leather	up to 50
wool socks	1 to 5
tin cans	50

France gave the go-ahead to construct a truck tunnel through the Pyrenees, a mountain chain on the border with Spain. The Wall Street Journal says environmentalists oppose the project because it would endanger

the habitat of the last nine known Pyrenees bears.

A recent Time/CNN poll found 64 percent of adult Americans would not "favor a law which would make it illegal for any private citizen to own a handgun for any purpose."

Northeastern forests face another exotic pests, this time one that attacks hemlock trees. The *Philadelphia Inquirer* reports the woolly adelgid is capable of wiping out entire stands of hemlocks. The aphid,

which arrived here early this century from Asia, turned up in the Delaware Water Gap about three years ago. Scientists fear the pest may now spread to the Pocono Plateau and beyond. One said, "We are threatened with the loss of most of our hemlocks . . ."

Answers: Wolverine, brown bear, cougar, jackrabbit, moose, mule deer and spruce grouse are not found in Pennsylvania. The unscrambled letters spell HABITAT.

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By Betsy Maugans

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This Way & That	JUL
Hummingbirds	AUG
Swamps	SEP
Not That Easy	OCT
Getting There and Back Again	NOV
Let it Snow	DEC

ARCHERY — Keith C. Schuyler

Bowhunters United	JAN
Nocks	FEB
Robin Hood	MAR
Counting the Costs	APR
The Right Bow for You	MAY
Outdoors, Indoors	JUN
Reckoning the Range	JUL
Greener Grass?	AUG
Equipment Care	SEP
The Color Orange	OCT
Spectator Sports	NOV
Sounding the Alarm	DEC

CONSERVATION EDUCATION

In the Wind — J. Scott Rupp	ALL
Outdoor Wildlife Learning — Bill Einsig	JAN,FEB,MAR,APR,MAY,JUN, JUL,SEP,OCT,NOV
PGC Annual Report 1991-92	JAN
Off the Fence —	MAY
Gloria Sue Westlund	
SPORT Essay Winners	JUN
What's in It for Them? — Ellen O'Donnell	
Margaret Brittingham, Kristi Sullivan	AUG
First-Timers' Education Pays —	
Dennis D. Russell, Sr.	AUG

DOGS

For the Love of Jake —	
Linda Zeiber	MAR
Sandy and the Little Fox —	MAY
Charles E. Travis, Jr.	

FUN GAMES

Fun Games — Connie Mertz	ALL
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GUNS AND FIREARMS SAFETY

First Gun — William Johnson	JAN
Room for Handloading — Don Lewis	JAN
Shooting Aids For '93 — Don Lewis	FEB
Reloading for Beginners — Don Lewis	MAR
A Custom 6mm BR — Don Lewis	APR
Right to Left — Don Lewis	MAY
Varmint Hunting Primer — Don Lewis	JUN
Home Style Bullets — Don Lewis	JUL
Sporting Clays — Don Lewis	AUG
How to Use Iron Sights — Don Lewis	SEP
Big Game Reloading — Don Lewis	OCT
Deer Cartridges and Bullets —	
Don Lewis	NOV
First Shot Accuracy — Don Lewis	DEC

HISTORY

Audubon in Pa. — Mike Sajna	JUN
The Century-Old Legacy of	
E. N. Woodcock — Gregg Rinkus	JUL
Pennsylvania's Other Rifle —	
Mike Sajna	DEC

HUNTING

Backtracking the Turkey —	
David R. Titus	JAN
Triple Trophy — Chad Reed	FEB
Familiarity Breeds Success —	
John W. McGonigle	FEB
Not Your Typical Buck —	
Carl W. McCardell	FEB
Big Thicket Buck of	
Horseshoe Hill — Tom Tatum	FEB
A Buck to Remember —	
Carl W. McCardell	FEB
One for Two — Carol L. Sipos	MAR
Man from Beaner Hollow —	
Kevin Robinson	MAR
First Kill — William Johnson	MAR
Things They Can't Teach	MAR
You — David P. Krupa	
Tom for a 12-Year Old — Richard Tate	APR
Understanding Spring	
Gobblers — Mike Raykovicz	APR
The Tradition — Carl W. McCardell	APR
Last Minute Gobbler —	
Herb Pennington	APR
Magic Season — Guy L. Ridge	APR
The Closest Encounter —	
D. L. Burkhart	MAY

Persistence Pays —		MISCELLANEOUS	
H. T. Montgomery II	MAY	Storyteller — Mike Sajna	MAR
In Search of a Longbeard —		Kestrel Nesting Box —	
Richard C. Cole, Sr.	MAY	Woodworking for Wildlife	MAR
A Third Time Charm — Andy Foyle	MAY	Havens for Wildlife — Ted J. Clutter	APR
Crowing about Crow Hunting —		Bringing Back the Chestnut —	
Jeff Bickmore	JUN	Scott Westcott	APR
Bowhunting for Woodchucks —		Rabies Update — Larry Iampietro	MAY
Robert Butz	JUN	Walking at a Child's Pace —	
Turnpike Trophies — Bob Delaney	JUN	George L. Harting	JUN
Readin' Sign — Mike Raykovicz	JUL	Nuisance Geese — Brian J. Gafney	JUN
The Golden Days of Hunting —		A Woodcutters Rack — Don Anderson	JUN
Dr. Jim O'Boyle	JUL	Deer, Friends & Videotape —	
Ted's Rock — H. T. Montgomery II	JUL	Mike Sajna	AUG
A Hunter's First Year — Richard Tate	JUL	Pennsylvania's Conservation	
Remembering Grandpa — Tom Fegely	AUG	Corps — Ken Wolgemuth	SEP
A Last-Week Blitz — Michael Kurtz	AUG	Analysis of an Accident —	
Duck Tactics On Lakes &		Dr. Joseph L. Smith	NOV
Reservoirs — Richard Martin	AUG	Hypothermia — Francis X. Sculley	DEC
Bushytails — Charles E. Branthoover	AUG		
Spring in September, Thoughts of		NATURAL HISTORY	
December — William Hunter	AUG	Hunter of the Night — Richard H. Yahner	
Bucks County Backyard Bowhunt —		& Thomas E. Morrell	FEB
David Kirk	SEP	Miniature Marvels — Connie Mertz	APR
Jump-Shooting Doves — Dave Cooper	SEP	The Sharp-Shinned Hawk —	
A Mini Mother Lode — Nick Sisley	SEP	Greg Grove	SEP
10 Minutes to Squirrels —			
Charles E. Branthoover	OCT	THE NATURALIST'S EYE —	
The Boys from Chesapeake —		Marcia Bonta	
Michael L. Morgart	OCT	A Bird For All Seasons	JAN
Keystone State Woodcock —		The Art of Snowshoes	FEB
Michael E. Mulvaney	OCT	Harbingers of Spring	MAR
October's Hunter's Moon —		Year of the Raccoon	APR
Eugene R. Slatick	OCT	A Ruff Month	MAY
Indian Summer Geese —		Still-Watching	JUN
Guy L. Ridge III	OCT	Inside Looking Out	JUL
A Good Move — Dave Dufford	OCT	Degenerate Wildflowers	AUG
Limiting Out in York County —		Saving all the Pieces	SEP
Bob D'Angelo	OCT	Redtail Days	OCT
Red Sunrise — Doug Stetler	NOV	Indian Summer Days	NOV
Packing It In — Paul A. Matthews	NOV	Christmas in Honduras	DEC
Just My Turn — Darlene Antrim	NOV		
Anniversary Bucks —		PGC STAFF WRITTEN	
Carl W. McCardell	NOV	Pheasant Recovery Project —	
Making the Grade — Doris Nagel	NOV	Joe Kosack	JAN
The Best News of All —		Pennsylvania's Breeding Bird Atlas —	
Andrew J. Hahn	NOV	Daniel Brauning	MAR
Last Minute Buck —		Summer Biathlon — George F. Mock	JUL
Paul A. Matthews	DEC	Streambank Fencing's 100th Mile	AUG
Snowshoe Doe — Bob Noonan	DEC	Bats — Hal Korber & Lisa Williams	SEP
Second Seasons — Carl W. McCardell	DEC	1993 Season Forecast —	
Southern Exposure — Jim Bashline	DEC	J. Scott Rupp	OCT
The Bald Trophy — Fran Gough	DEC	1992-93 Game-Take Survey —	
		Duane R. Diefenbach	OCT
LOOKING BACK		Taking Unlawful Advantage —	
Looking Back — William Wasserman	ALL	John Wasserman	NOV

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